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ISSUE
253

UNCHARTED 4

Deciphering all the secrets that await for Drake

THE ORDER: 1886

Hands-on verdict on the stunning PS4 exclusive

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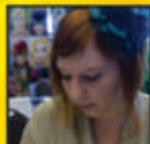
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INDESTRUCTIBLE



I'VE ALWAYS BEEN a fan of fighting games, but the absence of new ones on PS4 has caused me and my beloved arcade sticks to grow somewhat estranged in the last year or so. But having recently picked up *Guilty Gear* from the US, I've found myself falling in love again with one of my favourite genres.

My return couldn't be better timed, as it turns out. *Guilty Gear* is incredible and I still enjoy going back to *Injustice* too, dumb as it is. PS4 updates to *DOA5*, *Skullgirls* and *Ultra Street Fighter IV* are welcome, and *Mortal Kombat X* is looking awesome too, but it all leads up to the main event – *Street Fighter V* coming exclusively to PlayStation 4 is a massive deal and we've pulled together a team of genre experts and world-leading pro players to tell you exactly why.

You only need look at the updates made to *Street Fighter IV* to see how important these guys are to the evolution of the game – balancing and character additions usually reflect the collective consensus of the community and the competitive scene, meaning these guys probably have more say in how the series evolves than anyone at Capcom. You lot shouldn't feel left out, either. We had over 70,000 votes when we asked which characters you'd like to see in *SFV* and the results will likely be as surprising to Capcom as they were to us. Here's hoping the team acts on this data, as there's a lot of love for some unlikely fighters that we'd be delighted to see return.

Street Fighter V is far from the only PS4 exclusive to feature heavily this issue, either. We've gone crazy in-depth with research to uncover *Uncharted 4*'s best-kept secrets, plus we bring you hands-on verdicts on the likes of *The Order: 1886*, *Bloodborne* and *Until Dawn*. Something for everyone, then, unless you hate awesome games. You don't hate awesome games, do you? Great news...

Enjoy the issue, and I'll see ya online.

LUKE ALBIGÉS
DEPUTY EDITOR
@LukemonMGJ
PSN: PorthMinster

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STREET FIGHTER V

Experts and pros discuss
PS4's knockout exclusive

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You must defeat Sheng Long to stand a chance

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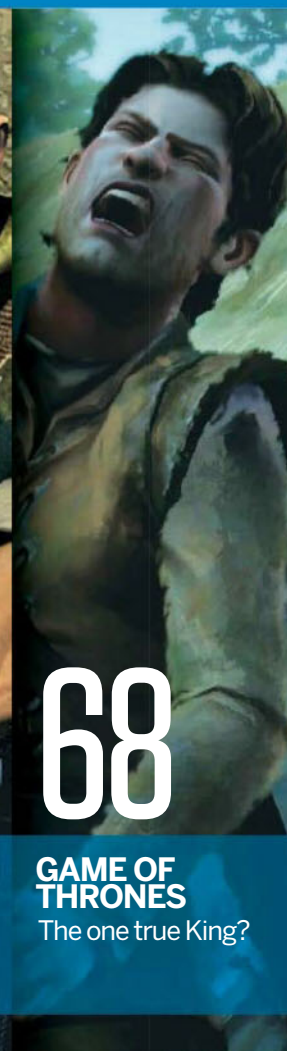
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V FOR VICTORY

How Sony and Capcom are set to take the fighting game community to the Promised Land with *Street Fighter V*

**"Fighting games are dying."
It's said time and again.**

With dwindling sales and a limited appeal compared to the triple-A games of other more popular genres, it can be easy to believe that fighting games' health bar is somewhat diminishing. Yet despite their declining sales figures, fighting games have created one of the most passionate communities in all of gaming. That, in no small part, is down to the success of *Street Fighter*. As Capcom UK fighting games community manager Matthew Edwards states, "*Street Fighter* has been a mainstay of competitive gaming ever since Guile threw his first Sonic Boom."

Since *Street Fighter II*'s release in 1991, the fighting game landscape has changed. Now, fighting games are facing their biggest challenge to date. Low sales means less developers are willing to invest in fighting games and the genre could potentially end up as dead as the text adventure. At the same time, however, the fighting game community is in full bloom. As professional fighting game player Justin Wong states, "[The tournament scene] has grown

substantially. Because of streaming and new technology, the numbers of tournament competitors and spectators has increased significantly." While the games struggle to sell, the scene grows exponentially.

Capcom fully understands that for *Street Fighter V* to succeed, it needs to work with the fighting game community. "Capcom is committed to growing the community and giving the tournament players a real incentive to push the

"WHILE THE GAMES STRUGGLE TO SELL, THE SCENE GROWS EXPONENTIALLY"

game further," says Edwards. Yet there is one inherent weakness to the competitive *Street Fighter* scene: it's fragmented. While some tournament goers are still playing *Street Fighter II*, others are playing *3rd Strike*, and still more are playing *Ultra Street Fighter IV*. And not only are there different games, but different systems too. "During the previous console generation, the *Street Fighter* community was primarily split between the three platforms:

PlayStation 3, Xbox 360 and PC," says Edwards. "This wasn't ideal as tournaments tend to be run on one platform rather than all three."

It was to this backdrop of a large and passionate but ultimately fragmented community that Capcom announced its partnership with Sony, making *Street Fighter V* exclusive to PS4 and PC. It's a move that seems to have been welcomed on all accounts.

As Olivier "Luffy" Hay, current *Street Fighter IV* World Champion says, "Sony will participate in Capcom's business plan to emancipate the game, while the exclusivity of *Street Fighter* to the system will boost PS4 sales." This announcement

was followed with news that *Street Fighter V* would utilise cross-platform play, merging the PS4 and PC scenes into one, and thus unifying the online community. "One of our goals with *Street Fighter V* is to have an online community that's less fragmented," says Edwards. "If you're [top on one system] you won't have to check another leaderboard to see if you're really at the top of the table."



BREAK THE WALLS DOWN

Environmental damage isn't used on a gameplay level, but smashing up backgrounds and chucking opponents through walls is still pretty awesome.

GREAT BALLS OF FIRE

We've heard Ryu call out his Denjin Hadoken, but also seen what looks more like the standard Shinku Hadoken. Selectable (or multiple) super attacks, perhaps?

STANCE, MAGIC STANCE

The initial gameplay reveal showed off a new technique that costs a full EX gauge to store a powered-up special. This can be used as a cancel too, like *SFIV*'s Focus Attack.

It's clear that Capcom has big plans, not just for *Street Fighter*, but for the competitive scene too. For its plans to come to fruition, however, it needs to deliver on the game itself.

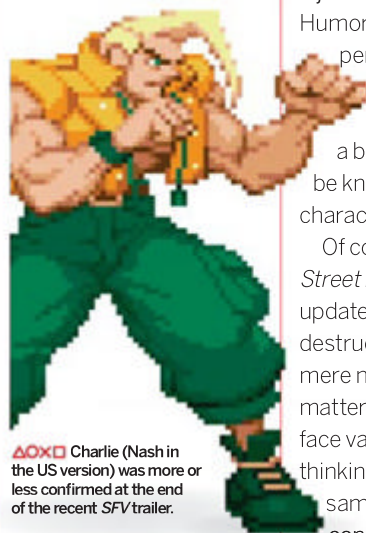
Running on Epic Games' *Unreal Engine 4* (as opposed to Capcom's own *Panta Rhei* engine), *Street Fighter V* is utilising some of the most powerful technology in the industry to ensure its place at the top of the market. Though only a few games have so far used *Unreal Engine 4*, they include the likes of *Batman: Arkham Knight*, *Dead Island 2*, and *Tekken 7* and they all look stunning. While some gamers have complained that the early footage of *Street Fighter V* looks too similar to *Street Fighter IV*, series producer Yoshinori Ono has

stated that the current graphics are nowhere near the final product. *Street Fighter V* is only approximately 20 per cent complete at the moment, and even at this early stage of development, there's already cause for excitement.

Where almost all previous *Street Fighter* games have been cartoonish, *Street Fighter V* is far more realistic. Gone are the cutesy and rather flat character models seen in *Street Fighter IV*. In their place are more solid and lifelike character models, more like those in Namco's *Tekken* series than what we're used to seeing in *Street Fighter*. The backgrounds have been upgraded too, and now feature partially destructible environments similar to NetherRealm's *Mortal Kombat* and

Injustice: Gods Among Us. Humorous touches also add personality: one stage takes place in a restaurant where a bowl of noodles can be knocked over onto a character's head.

Of course, for the serious *Street Fighter* player, updated graphics and destructible environments are mere niceties. What ultimately matters is gameplay. Taken at face value, you could be forgiven for thinking that *Street Fighter V* is yet the same old fighting game that's been consistently updated since 1991. Spinning Bird Kicks, Shoryukens, and, of



△×△ Charlie (Nash in the US version) was more or less confirmed at the end of the recent *SFV* trailer.

BLAST FROM THE PAST

1987 STREET FIGHTER

Introduced six button controls and command-based special moves

1991 STREET FIGHTER II: THE WORLD WARRIOR

Added multiple playable characters and perfected gameplay

1992 STREET FIGHTER II: CHAMPION EDITION

Bison, Balrog, Vega, and Sagat become playable characters





△××△ Ryu's Denjin Hadoken from *3rd Strike* is one of the many moves to make it from *Street Fighter III* to *Street Fighter V*.

course, Hadokens... it's all very familiar. That, however, is simply the nature of fighting games. In a genre where for the past 30 years, two characters have stood face to face with a health bar above them, and have continued to punch, kick and fireball their way to a knockout, it's easy to think nothing changes. So far from the shooter genre (where 2D side-scrollers have become fully realised virtual worlds) or the RPG genre, where simple top-down quests have now become staggeringly epic stories with enough characters and lore to fill an entire volume of encyclopedias — fighting games are, by contrast, all about iteration and nuances.



1P

PLAYER PROFILE JUSTIN WONG



OVERVIEW:

Justin Wong is arguably the greatest American fighting game player of all time, with numerous tournament victories in *Marvel Vs Capcom 2*, *Street Fighter III*, and *Street Fighter IV*.

CHARACTERS:

Chun-Li (*Street Fighter III*) / Rufus (*Street Fighter IV*)

PLAY STYLE:

In his own words: "My play style is very passive. I prefer to defend more than attack. And I only attack at the times where I think it's safe to do so."

FAMOUS FOR:

Justin Wong is pretty much the best *Marvel Vs Capcom 2* player of all time. He was *Evo Marvel Vs Capcom 2* champ every year between 2000 and 2010. He placed 17th in *Ultra Street Fighter IV* at Evo last year. Justin Wong was the victim of Daigo "The Beast" Umehara's now legendary 'Super-Parry' (also known as *Evo Moment 37*).

DEVICE USED:

Razer Atrix arcade stick.

Evolution in fighting games is seen not in complete overhauls but in refinement, in the constant perfecting of a character's move-set, in Ryu's Hadoken becoming the Shinku Hadoken, becoming the Denjin Hadoken, and the Metsu Hadoken; in *Super Street Fighter II*'s Super meter becoming *Street Fighter III*'s EX meter, becoming *Street Fighter IV*'s Ultra meter. *Street Fighter*'s evolution has been more akin to a sport than a videogame, with changes to the rules year-on-year leading towards a more perfect game. So it is that each game has been a variation on a theme, a new take on the same premise.

One of the most important aspects of every *Street Fighter* game is the character roster. *Street Fighter* has always been a masterclass in character

1992
STREET FIGHTER II: HYPER FIGHTING
Introduced faster play and new special moves

1993
SUPER STREET FIGHTER II: THE NEW CHALLENGERS
Added Cammy, Fei Long, T.Hawk and Dee Jay, and a scoring system

1994
SUPER STREET FIGHTER II TURBO
Brought in Akuma and Super Combos

1995
STREET FIGHTER ALPHA
Expanded the Super Combo system, added air blocking, chain combos, throw recoveries, and rolls



As ever, Ryu leads the charge in *Street Fighter V*, in which he returns to his 'Heavy Hitter' days of *Street Fighter III*.



2P

PLAYER PROFILE OLIVIER "LUFFY" HAY



OVERVIEW:

Olivier "Luffy" Hay's tournament life started with *Street Fighter IV* in which he very quickly became one of the world's best players.

CHARACTERS:

Rose (*Street Fighter IV*)

PLAY STYLE:

In his own words: "I'm mostly an adaptive type, which means that I try to see how my opponent plays, and then find moves to counter him." Luffy is a master of learning on the fly, recognising his opponent's strengths and weaknesses and responding accordingly. He will turn your own moves against you.

TOURNAMENT WINS:

Luffy has won numerous *Street Fighter IV* tournaments since 2011, but by far his biggest victory came when he became World Champion of *Ultra Street Fighter IV* at Evo2K14. "Winning Evo feels amazing," says Luffy. "It's the tournament you prepare the most for. It's an extremely proud moment as a player, winning Evo... it's once in a lifetime."

DEVICE USED: Original PlayStation pad.

SFV's combo system already looks a little more versatile than that of SFIV.



design. As commentator and former Capcom community manager Seth Killian says in documentary *I Am Street Fighter*, "There's something powerful and resonant about the characters... you can find yourself in one of the *Street Fighter* characters." So iconic is *Street Fighter*'s cast that even a professional player will often choose their character based not on their moves but on how they relate to them. "I chose to play Rose because she's a fortune teller, helping the other contestants," says Luffy. "I'm often the type to give advice to my friends, [so I find I can relate to Rose]."

Street Fighter characters don't just make for exemplary iconography, though – they're essential to the core fabric of the game. Most shooters could star any character capable of

wielding a gun. *Street Fighter V*'s characters, however, require perfect balancing. Only through a varied and balanced character roster can Capcom ensure that players of all different play-styles are given fair opportunity. So it is that while Luffy says, "Rose suits my play style as she's a zoner who keeps her opponent away," Justin Wong requires something different – a character who allows for what he calls a "passive play-style". He says, "I prefer to defend more than attack, and I only attack at the times where I think it's safe to do so." Grappler, rushdown, zoner, mix-up...

1995
STREET FIGHTER THE MOVIE: THE GAME
Introduced digitised characters

1996
STREET FIGHTER ALPHA II
Introduced the Custom Combo system

1996
STREET FIGHTER EX
Took the series into full 3D

1997
STREET FIGHTER III: THE NEW GENERATION
Created a more free flowing play style and introduced high jumps, dash and retreat, quick stand, leap attacks and the parry system



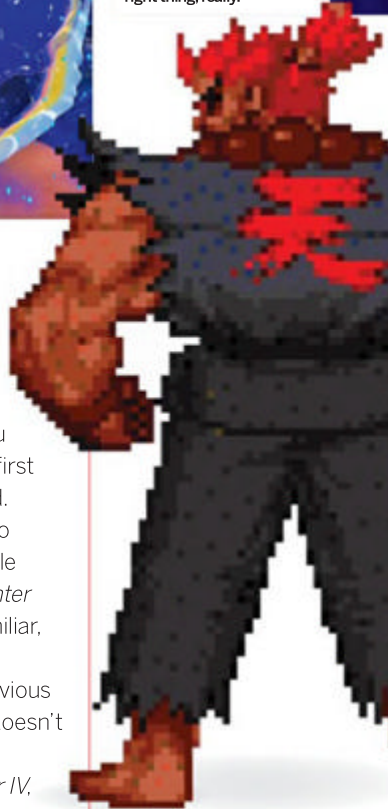
whatever characters Capcom pick, they need to ensure that players can play in whatever style they've become familiar with.

Not surprisingly, Ryu and Chun-Li were the first characters announced. Both are characters who personify the 'footsie' style – the traditional *Street Fighter* play-style. Despite being familiar, both characters are already showing differences to their previous incarnations. Ryu, for instance, doesn't appear to be the same balanced character he was in *Street Fighter IV*, but more of a heavy hitter. His walk speed and moves seem slower than in *Street Fighter IV*, he's regained his *Street Fighter III* Super Art, the Denjin Hadoken, and he's found some meaty normal attacks we've not seen before. Chun-Li, meanwhile, has her Spinning Bird Kick and Kikoken fireball from *Street Fighter II*, as well as a *Street Fighter X Tekken* style ground-bounce that allows her to continue combos after a knockdown. Of course, this is just early

ΔOXO As well as almost topping our poll, Q deserves to come back purely on the basis that he is a badass.



ΔOXO The roster could do with a few less shots, so this is just Poison doing the right thing, really.



ΔOXO Gamers of a certain age will probably find this image takes them back to a better time and place...



ΔOXO SFIII's presentation improved immensely between *New Challengers* and *3rd Strike*.

days. Capcom continually tweaked and balanced characters even half a decade after *Street Fighter IV*'s release, so we're sure to see numerous changes during *Street Fighter V*'s development.

Given their intent to unify the *Street Fighter* scene, Capcom is bound to take a thoughtful approach to the character roster, including characters from all major *Street Fighter* games in order to please as many fans as possible.

The addition of Charlie Nash (Guile's counterpart and fellow zoner) has already put a smile on the face of many older gamers — the last time Charlie was playable was in *Marvel Vs Capcom 2* in 2000 and, before that, in *Street Fighter Alpha III* in 1998. We expect to see faces old and new as Capcom fills out a predicted sixteen character spaces between now and the game's release.

As for the overall feel and play style of *Street Fighter V*, Capcom is taking its traditional holistic approach to the game's design, incorporating different aspects of numerous *Street Fighter* games to create a game that is at once familiar but also new.

“THERE IS SOMETHING POWERFUL AND RESONANT ABOUT THE CHARACTERS”

1997
STREET FIGHTER III: SECOND IMPACT
Included Shin Akuma, Hugo and Urien, plus EX attacks, taunts, and throw escapes

1998
STREET FIGHTER ALPHA III
Introduced Isms and Guard Power Gauge

1998
STREET FIGHTER EX 2
Added Excel Combos

1999
STREET FIGHTER III: 3RD STRIKE
Included the Guard Parry system

FEATURE | STREET FIGHTER



If *Street Fighter V* leans towards any one of its predecessors, it's *Street Fighter III*. Though the possibility of a return of the parry system is now looking more like a nay than a yay, there's still plenty of *3rd Strike* action in *Street Fighter V*. Take Ryu's Super fireball, for instance.

It's not the Shinku or the Metsu from *Street Fighter IV*, but rather the Denjin Hadoken, a Super Art from *Street Fighter III*. Then there's Chun-Li, who has a new spinning kick air-combo-ender that looks uncannily like her Tensei Ranka Super Art from *Third Strike*. She's also rocking a new attack a lot like her Houyoku Sen attack – the *3rd Strike* Super Art that Daigo "The Beast" Umehara famously parried at Evo 2004 to defeat Wong. Add to this a *Street Fighter III*-style EX meter, normal-cancellable Ultras, and the fact that certain moves appear to have Guard Crush properties, and it's clear that Capcom are intent on satisfying the *Street Fighter III* fans, who are especially



prominent in Japan, where *3rd Strike* tournaments remain popular.

Street Fighter IV fans are also likely to be pleased with the direction Capcom is taking. For starters, the Revenge meter in *Street Fighter V* looks near identical to its predecessor's Ultra meter (and even shares the pre-release 'Revenge' name). An attack similar to *Street Fighter IV*'s Focus Attack allows moves to be cancelled, leaving plenty of potential for combos—we've already seen Chun-Li cancel her Lightning Legs into a continued combo, and can't wait to see what combo-intensive players like Sako and Poongko come up with. Finally, there's the nature of the combo system itself. The biggest combo we've seen so far has been Ryu hitting (what looks like) a jumping Fierce to close standing Strong to far standing Strong to crouching Forward and finally into a Denjin Hadoken. Though it's yet to be confirmed, the timing and combination of attacks looks like a 'linking' system (timed button presses) rather than the chain combo system of *Street Fighter X Tekken*. Speaking of that crossover game; the ground bounce makes a welcome return, allowing for air combos to be continued for a short spell after a knockdown.

Perhaps the biggest surprise to the *Street Fighter V* formula so far is a stance change system which nods back to the Alpha series. The burning EX meter allows for a stance change that alters characters' moves. Chun-Li's stance change, for instance, doubles her attacks such that a Kikoken becomes



ΔOXΔ Watch an expert go nuts with Alpha's custom combos and you'll feel all kinds of inferior.

ΔOXΔ Luffy is one of only four people to have won the *Street Fighter IV* World Championships at Evo.

2000
STREET FIGHTER EX 3
Added tag team battles

2003
HYPER STREET FIGHTER II
Released to commemorate the 15th anniversary of *Street Fighter II*

2006
STREET FIGHTER ANTHOLOGY
A compilation of the Alpha series



ΔΟΧΔ Ryu: kicking people in the face since 1987.

two Kikokens. This could add a new element to the fireball zoning game as one fireball cancels the enemies attack and the other hits them. Interestingly, the animations that lead into these stances seem elementally charged. Ryu's animation sees him enveloped in lightning (similar to the introduction to *Super Street Fighter II*, in which electricity wrapped around his body prior to him throwing a fireball). Chun-Li's animation, meanwhile, incorporates water effects. It's yet to be confirmed whether these elemental animations have effects beyond the visual.

By approaching *Street Fighter V* through a process of unification,

Capcom should end up pleasing the vast majority of *Street Fighter* fans. What remains in question, however, is the new approach Capcom is taking to the offline tournament scene. While Edwards states that "Capcom's always had some focus on the competitive scene," prior to 2014, Capcom took a conservative approach to the community. The majority of tournaments for the past 25 years haven't been run by Capcom but by hardcore members of the fighting game community, such as Shoryuken. com's Joey Cuellar (MrWizard), Tom Cannon (Inkblot), and Tony Cannon (Ponder) – the team behind the Evolution Fighting Game Series, the

"PERHAPS THE BIGGEST SURPRISE TO THE STREET FIGHTER V FORMULA IS A STANCE CHANGE SYSTEM"



2015 Pro Tour would be \$500,000. This represents a major increase over the 2014 Pro Tour, in which Grand Finals winner Momochi took home a comparatively modest \$30,000. "By offering a prize pool of \$500,000 for this year's Capcom Pro Tour, the hope is that the level of competition will go through the roof," says Edwards.

There are those, however, who question where the boundary lies between Capcom and the tournament scene which has been built by the hard work of fans. "Capcom doesn't so much want to take charge of the *Street Fighter* community as it wants to build a bigger stage for it to thrive on," says Edwards. Though some in the fighting game community will contest the point, Justin Wong says, "It's great that Capcom is getting more involved with the tournament scene. The community is only going to get bigger and better."



ΔΟΧΔ Sadly, *Street Fighter X Tekken* wasn't as good as the Marvel crossovers...

2008 STREET FIGHTER IV

Introduced Focus Attacks and Ultra Combos

2010 SUPER STREET FIGHTER IV

Added selectable Ultras

2011 STREET FIGHTER III: 3RD STRIKE ONLINE EDITION

Added Parry training and challenges

NAME	DEBUT GAME	YEAR
KEN	STREET FIGHTER	1987
GAMMY	SUPER STREET FIGHTER II	1993
AKUMA	SUPER STREET FIGHTER II TURBO	1994
SKULLOMANIA	STREET FIGHTER EX	1996
ALEX	STREET FIGHTER III: THE NEW GENERATION	1997
KARIN	STREET FIGHTER ALPHA III	1998
R. MIKA	STREET FIGHTER ALPHA III	1998
Q	STREET FIGHTER III: 3RD STRIKE	1999
VIOLENT KEN	SNK VS CAPCOM CHAOS	2003
JURI	SUPER STREET FIGHTER IV	2010

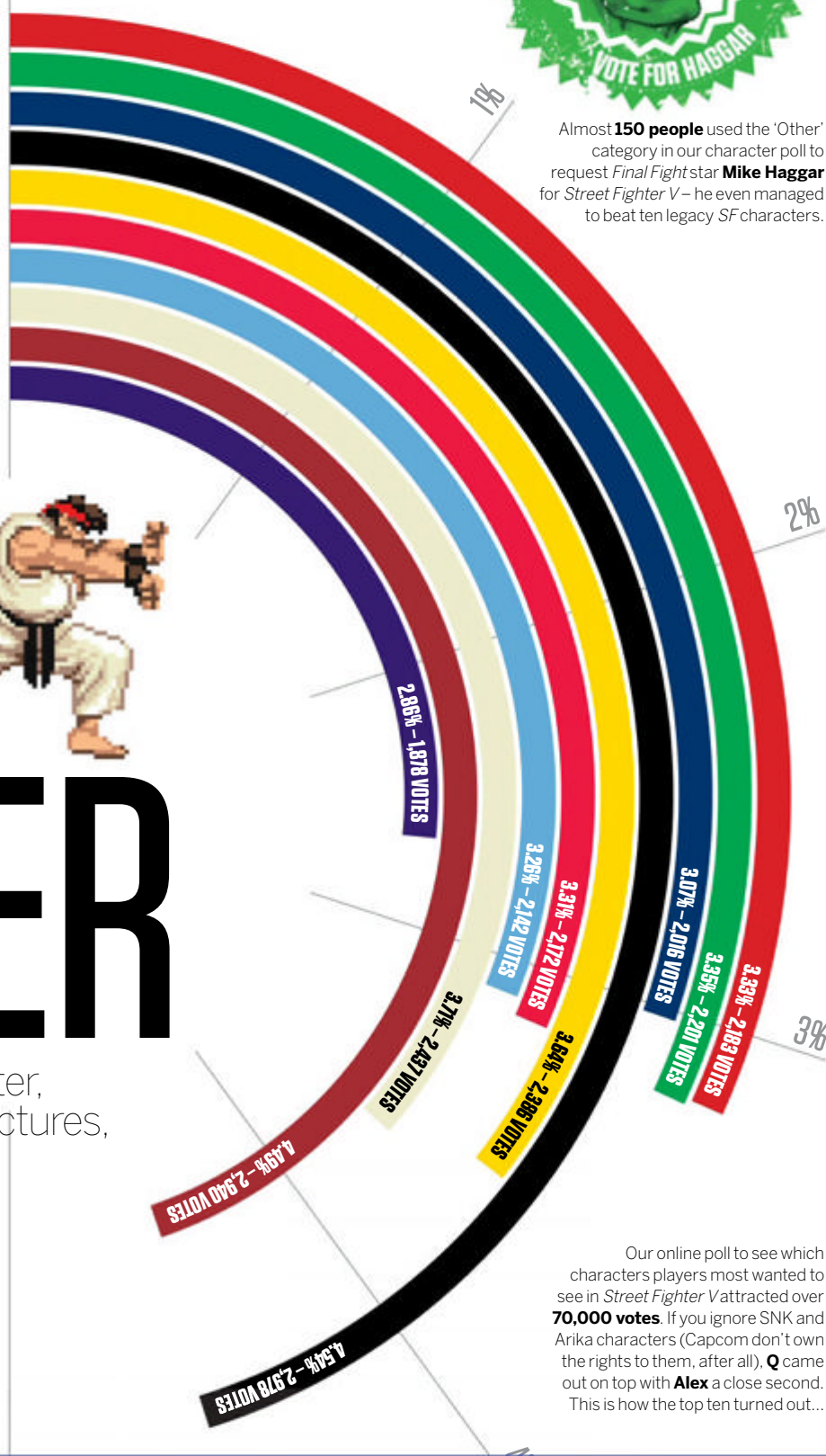
STAT FIGHTER

The wonderful world of Street Fighter, explored through the medium of pictures, numbers and colours. Enjoy!

36 MILLION
GAME SALES OVER 80 TITLES



Almost **150 people** used the 'Other' category in our character poll to request *Final Fight* star **Mike Haggar** for *Street Fighter V* – he even managed to beat ten legacy *SF* characters.



Our online poll to see which characters players most wanted to see in *Street Fighter V* attracted over **70,000 votes**. If you ignore SNK and Arika characters (Capcom don't own the rights to them, after all), **Q** came out on top with **Alex** a close second. This is how the top ten turned out...

2011
SUPER STREET FIGHTER IV: ARCADE EDITION
Oni is introduced to the franchise

2011
SUPER STREET FIGHTER IV: 3D EDITION
Mapped Street Fighter IV's gameplay to the 3DS's interface

2012
SUPER STREET FIGHTER IV: ARCADE EDITION 2012
Improved character balance

CHARACTER POPULARITY (BY DEBUT GAME)



COMPETITION PRIZE POOLS (APPROXIMATE 2014 DATA)

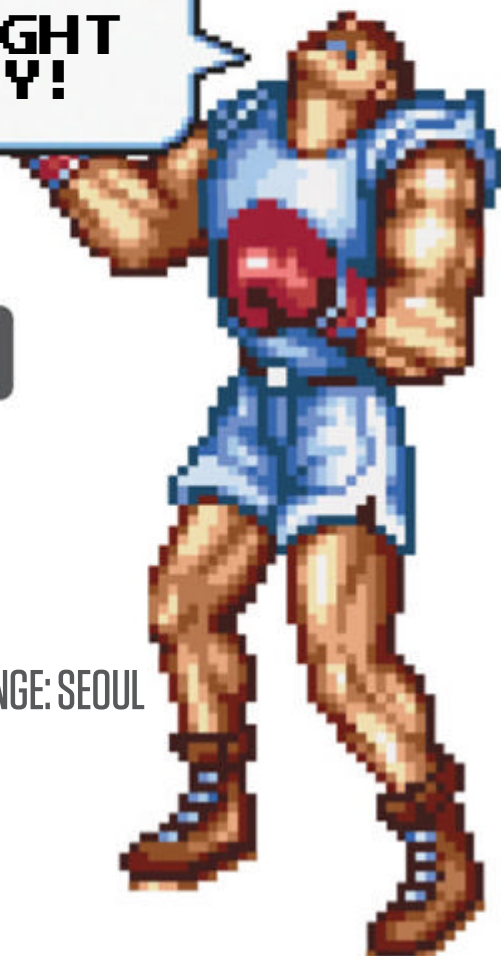
MY FIGHT MONEY!

CAPCOM CUP
\$50,000

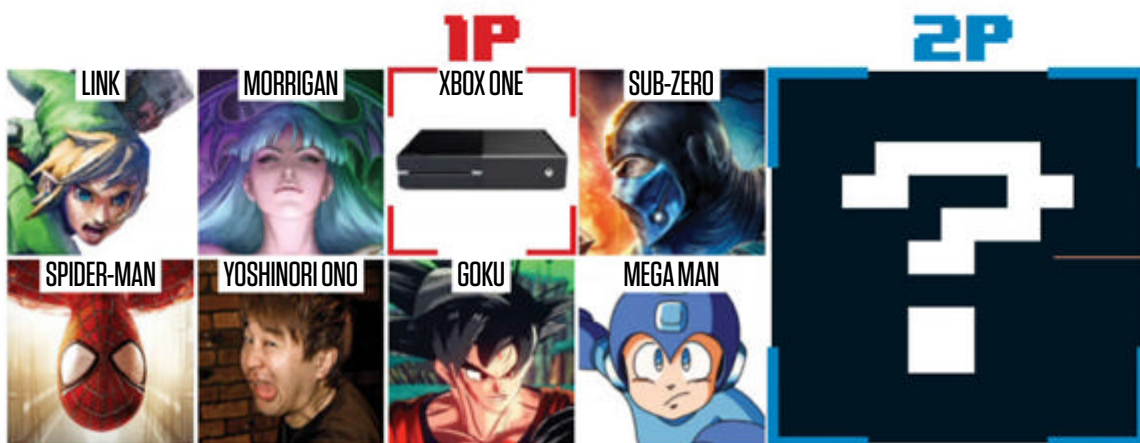
EVO
\$30,000

WECG GLOBAL CHALLENGE: SEOUL
\$15,000

DREAMHACK SUMMER
\$6,000



NEVER GONNA HAPPEN... Some genuine suggestions from the 'Other' category in our poll



27%
OF PEOPLE CAN'T READ

FOR SOME REASON, OVER A QUARTER OF RESPONDENTS WHO USED THE 'OTHER' FIELD VOTED FOR PEOPLE WHO WERE ALREADY ON THE LIST. COME ON, GUYS...

2012
STREET FIGHTER X TEKKEN
Turned a large portion of the Tekken cast two-dimensional

2014
ULTRA STREET FIGHTER IV
Introduced Red Focus Attack

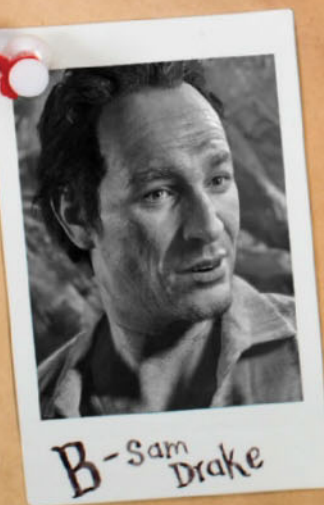
2016 (TBC)
STREET FIGHTER V
Competes to become the best in the franchise by combining all the best elements of the previous games and adding all new mechanics



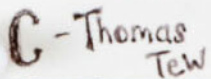
Deciphering Uncharted 4

G - Panama *

In the spirit of intrepid treasure hunter Nathan Drake, we pull together the clues, myths and legends that surround Uncharted 4: A Thief's End with a view to uncovering what Drake is doing on the island of Île Sainte-Marie and what treasure he hopes to find there.



H - Soul

[illegible]

D-Cryptogram



E - Henry Avery
F - Ganj-i-Sawai

I-Goa

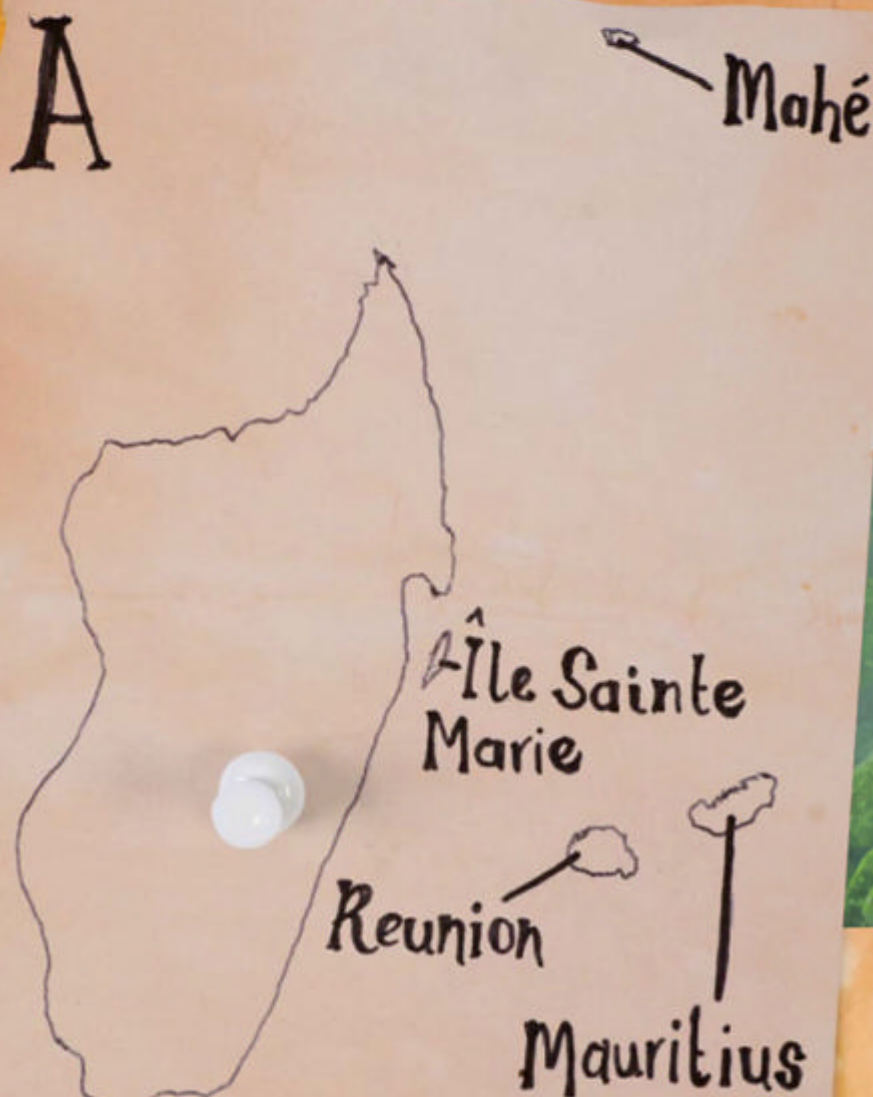
A

Mahé

Aîle Sainte
Marie

Reunión

. Mauritius



Île Sainte-Marie (Libertalia)



Situated off the coast of Madagascar, the island of Île Sainte-Marie is highlighted on the map we see in the first trailer for *Uncharted* and is the alleged location of the fabled pirate colony of Libertalia for which Drake and his brother are searching. It was also a base of operations for famed pirates Henry Avery (mentioned in Drake's notes) and Olivier Levasseur.

A- Mahé (The Pirate Carvings)

Carvings discovered on Mahé's Bel Ombre beach in 1923 showing a dog, snake, turtle, horse, fly, two joined hearts, a keyhole, a staring eye, a ballot box, a figure of a young woman, and the head of a man have been interpreted as carvings made by pirates. Guess who it's been claimed owned the land in the early 1700s? Our friend Olivier Levasseur. Given that we know *Uncharted 4* contains a section where Drake discovers a monument with a carving, it wouldn't surprise us if interpreting such pirate carvings is one of the challenges Drake will face.

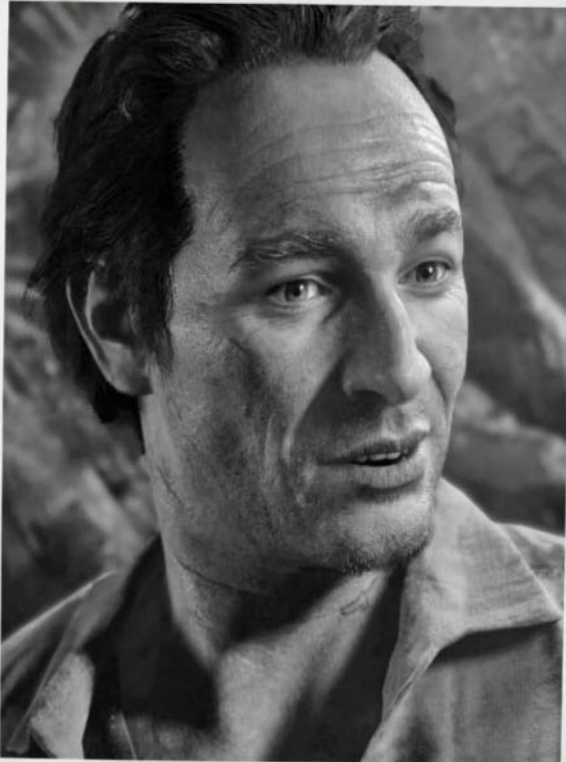


Réunion Island (Levasseur's Treasure)

It was here that what has been described as the most valuable heist in pirate history occurred when Olivier Levasseur raided Portuguese ship *Our Lady Of The Cape*, which had been damaged in a storm. Levasseur's fabled treasure is still being hunted for to this day, fueled by the cryptogram Levasseur threw into the crowd at his execution, proclaiming that anyone who could understand it would find his treasure. Some claim that Levasseur's treasure is buried in an area now submerged, which ties in with the *Uncharted 4* concept art that shows Drake searching submerged buildings. In any case, Levasseur's legendary treasure would be a worthy prize for an adventurer like Drake.

Mauritius (Freemason Treasure)

Bernardin Nageon de L'Estang, also known as Le Butin, was a naval officer alleged to have been given the locations of several secret treasures after convincing a dying captain that he was a fellow freemason. It's been variously claimed that L'Estang collected several of these treasures, leaving four behind, that he left details of his hidden treasures on Mauritius in his will for his nephew to find, that he had found the fabled treasure of Levasseur, and that he was the one that wrote the legendary cryptogram attributed to Levasseur. Secret freemason treasure hidden in locations across the globe sounds like it would be right up Drake's street.



B-Sam
Drake

B- Columbia (Sam Drake)

Just when and where did Drake part ways with his older brother Sam, who will be a companion character (similar to Ellie in *The Last Of Us*) in *Uncharted 4*? The earliest we have got to see Drake is in Columbia as a teenager when he met Victor Sullivan and Katherine Marlowe, but even then there was no mention of a brother. Finding out about Sam Drake, the circumstances in which he and Nathan parted ways and their relationship is going to be an interesting part of *Uncharted 4*.



C-Thomas
Tew

C- Rhode Island (Thomas Tew)

The 'Rhode Island Pirate' that's referred to in Drake's notebook is Thomas Tew, a pirate who joined Henry Avery in his attack on the Ganj-i-Sawai, but who was killed during the engagement. Drake's notes suggest that he believes Tew may have actually survived this encounter. We reckon that discovering Tew's true fate will form part of *Uncharted 4*'s story. Interestingly, Tew is alleged to be one of the founders of Île Sainte-Marie's pirate utopia of Libertalia.

"Levasseur's legendary treasure would be a worthy prize for an adventurer like Drake"



ΔOX□ Rumours that Drake is trying to track down a copy of *Vib-Ribbon* for PSone are so far unconfirmed.



J N F L D 7 E A 4 7 E N J B G L U E R B O R I V B G L V C L V
 J U R L E G V F L V L J D V L V L U J L F J L 4 7 L E R G V
 L B C V V B 7 V J B L 7 V L M K N G L 7 L A 4 7 L M K C L B L G L
 U L 7 B A C C L L L R C V L L R C V L L J B V L V 4 7 L R 7 J V
 7 E V V L A V 4 7 G L N J V J B L U L C J N L G V A V B V M 4 V 7
 < N 4 C L A N C C V N G L 7 L A 3 C L V M J V V L V 4 7 C L M J
 L 7 B 7 B C L J 4 V F A L 4 V V A B V J 7 B D V B L M C L L
 M R C L 7 N L M B L G 4 7 L L L 7 7 L U J L 7 7 V C N C V J 4 L
 F 4 J 4 M 4 V V 4 7 L G L J U R J J 4 M 3 L J V N M 4 G L L
 7 3 J J B L V N M R L N B 7 3 C L A 4 L B C L V 4 7 C A G
 B B C O 7 M 4 7 C J B G L N B V L G 4 7 M J B L 7 V 4 N F C 7
 C L 7 L J U L E J 7 L G U L J B L 7 V L M O L L V 4 7 G L
 7 A R C C L 7 F 4 B C 7 B V L B 4 U L B 4 4 7 L L 7 7 7 F
 B C L E V V L L J O G L U 4 7 J 7 L V V L U L V L X U L L
 U J 7 V U 4 C B M R C F 7 U M G 7 B G 4 7 J M 7 7 F
 L V V M L C 7 7 / M L L J 4 V 7 L 7 U L L 4 U C F
 4 4 7 U B L L C F L U B L L L C G V L V C L V C

D-Cryptogram

D- Greece (The Cryptogram)

Puzzles have long been a feature of *Uncharted* and we're expecting solving cryptograms with clues to the locations of buried treasure to be a part of that. The two most likely to appear would be

L'Estang's cryptograms, or the one that Levasseur was said to have thrown into the crowd at his execution, alleged to be related to the Greek myth of Hercules and his twelve labours.



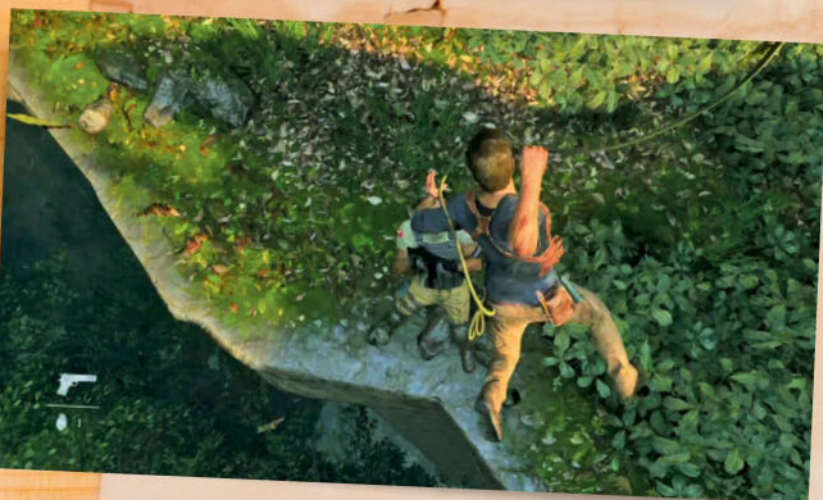
E - Henry Avery
F - Ganj-i-Sawai

F- Surat, India to Yemen (Ganj-i-Sawai)

Another fabled pirate haul was pulled off by a man mentioned in Drake's notes, Henry Avery (also known as Henry Every). Avery raided a ship called the Ganj-i-Sawai – its contents worth between \$200 and \$400 million in today's money – on route from Surat, India to Yemen. A letter discovered by Drake in the PlayStation Experience trailer suggests that treasure hunters have been searching for his fortune on Île Sainte-Marie since at least the early 1800s. Perhaps Naughty Dog has taken some artistic license and mixed the stories of Olivier Levasseur and Henry Avery, or perhaps searching for one of the two treasure hauls will lead Drake onto the other?

E- Nassau (Henry Avery)

Henry Avery's last known location was Nassau where, after escaping the grasp of the authorities, he fades into myth and legend. Speaking of which, one of the legends surrounding Avery is that the chest in which his treasure was kept required three keys, one held by Avery, and two by other captains. A search for three keys sounds like an ideal set up for an *Uncharted* game. Perhaps the other holders of the keys were Olivier Leveasaur and Thomas Tew? Perhaps the Flaming Cross of Goa is actually a key? Mysteries abound...

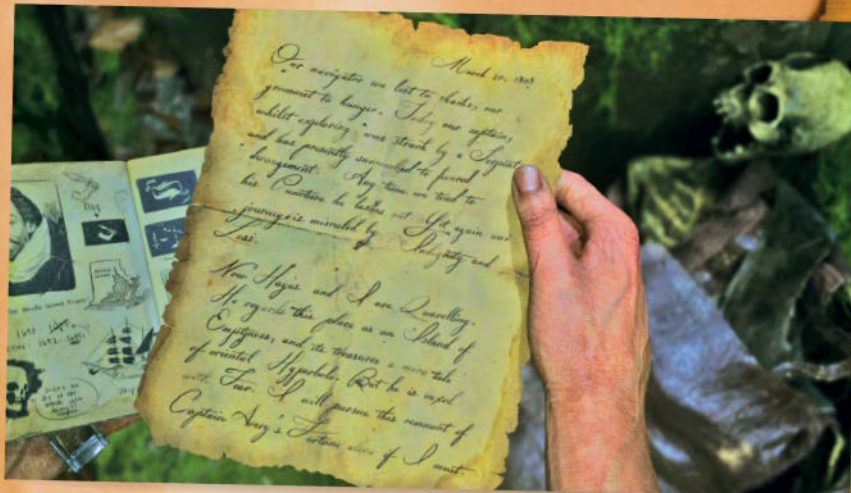


G - Panama (John Taylor)

John Taylor undertook the famous robbery of Our Lady Of the Cape alongside Olivier Levesseur, but the two would eventually (and inevitably) have a falling out, with Taylor making his way to Panama. In his globetrotting search for pirate treasure, we would not be surprised if Drake paid a visit to Panama to search for the odd clue, or perhaps even Taylor's own share of the treasure.

H - South Africa (Rafe and Nadine)

Drake and his brother will have two rivals to contend with as they traverse the globe hunting treasure – Rafe and Nadine. We don't know much about the two new characters at this stage, other than that Nadine owns a private military company that is based in South Africa. The accents of the men that Drake battles on Île Sainte-Marie suggests that they are indeed Nadine's soldiers.



"Perhaps the Flaming Cross of Goa is actually a key? Mysteries abound..."



I - Goa (The Flaming Cross Of Goa)

Uncharted history tells us that Drake will be on the hunt for one artifact or another in *A Thief's End*. One candidate is The Flaming Cross Of Goa, a treasure which Levesseur was alleged to have obtained in his robbery of Our Lady Of The Cape. Purported to be a jewel-encrusted cross, there's no proof that it ever actually existed. That shroud of mystery makes it ideal for Naughty Dog to embellish its legend and perhaps even give it an unexpected function.



SMART DRESSED MAN

Kudos to the design team for managing to combine the look of the era and an element of older regal style to create splendid uniforms for the titular knights.



ETA FEBRUARY | PUB SONY | DEV READY AT DAWN | TWITTER @RAD_STUDIOS

The Order: 1886

Not your average history lesson



WE OFTEN SEE publishers reluctant to put out games that carry the current year's date for fear that they will quickly appear to be outdated.

It's mostly sports games, to be honest – *FIFA* welcomed in the New Year all the way back in September, and it's entirely conceivable that the only reason there wasn't a *Tiger Woods* game last year was to prevent the series from getting too far ahead of time and managing to tear the very fabric of space-time. Which, in hindsight, was a pretty good call as 'apocalypse via golf game' isn't exactly a glamorous way for all known life to end. Still, with this naming trend in mind, you really have to respect

Sony's conviction in signing off on a title that is already 129 years out of date.

More cynical types may even go so far as to take that observation a step further, using it to suggest that it goes some way to explaining the old-fashioned cover shooter mechanics or the insta-fail stealth sections, but we're pretty sure that it's fear of exactly that kind of criticism that has kept the game in hiding until mere weeks before release. We've been doing this long enough to know that publishers not handing over the controller until so close to launch is generally a bad sign. But in this case, we were pleasantly surprised to discover that *The Order* ducks that particular trend – what we've played so

far, while not mechanically progressive, is as tight, as enjoyable and as beautiful a shooter as exists on the new generation of consoles right now.

It's been a hell of a long time since we had one of those moments where we didn't pick up control of a character where we were supposed to because it still looked like we were waiting for a cut scene to finish, but *The Order* managed to slap us with two such moments in the space of a single level. It just looks that damn good that whether you're left scooping your jaw back off the floor or simply don't realise that there's no transition between in-engine story scenes and actual gameplay, you too are likely to be left behind. As with *The Evil Within*, black bars



AHEAD OF ITS TIME

While technology may have improved to allow for crazy weapons and such, most of the setting still appears to be like good old Victorian London.

"IT IS PRETTY LINEAR, BUT THEN AGAIN, TRY TO NAME A COVER SHOOTER THAT ISN'T"

PRETTY ON THE INSIDE

While environments don't seem to offer much in terms of exploration, both internal and outdoor settings are treated with a similar degree of care.



ΔOX Environments are superb – this kitchen fire fight is hectic as all hell, with shots ricocheting off pots and pans.

△×□ Cover shooting is typical but extremely solid. There's no better example on PS4 so far, put it that way...

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

20 / 98



M2 'FALCHION' AUTO-RIFLE



RT

- ▲ Visuals that showcase what the PS4 is really capable of like nothing else so far.
- Tight shooting that lives up to the great graphics – it's a damn fine cover shooter.
- × A varied arsenal, blending historical artifacts with steampunk tech.
- Magnificent moustaches the likes of which you only *wish* you could grow.

are used to reduce screen size down to cinema widescreen dimensions – it's not the most subtle way to improve graphical fidelity in the visible area, but we will say that it only took a few minutes for us to forget that the bars were there. Some will hate it for this, just as they did with Mikami's horror game, but the vast majority likely won't even notice at all.

Assuming you fall into the latter camp, you're in for one hell of a treat. The slight reduction in resolution created by the borders allows Ready At Dawn to effortlessly throw characters, geometry and animations like nothing seen so far this generation around – while navigating the

beautiful a belated first birthday present as Sony's console could ever have hoped to receive.

There's good news on the gameplay front, too. As much as it does conform to many typical cover shooter rules and conventions that have existed for over a decade, it's slick, weighty and fun to play. Much of this can be attributed to the arsenal of unique weaponry available and although many of the strange guns you'll use actually feel fairly normal, there are enough outlandish secondary fire modes and novel twists on genre staples to make most weapons interesting and satisfying to wield. There's a *Resistance* vibe given off by the steampunk gun

“YOU CAN ALMOST PICTURE THE TEAM FLIPPING OFF EVERY OTHER CODER IN THE INDUSTRY WHO IS TOILING OVER A PS4 DEBUG UNIT”

strut-lined belly of a blimp, where interlocking metal support poles extend more or less to the edge of the visible play space, you can almost picture the team flipping off every other coder in the industry who is toiling over a PS4 debug unit. It is utterly insane how detailed environments are and while there are clearly sacrifices made to allow this level of fidelity – it is pretty linear, for one thing, but then again, try and name a cover shooter that isn't – but as a showpiece for the PS4 hardware, this is as

rack, from the rifle that offers a powerful air burst to the Coach Gun, which feels like firing every shotgun that has ever appeared in a videogame at the same time. The setting affords Ready At Dawn the luxury to do whatever it wants in terms of weapons and given that the variety in the space of a single level proved more exciting than that seen in most FPS releases, it looks like the team is on the right track.

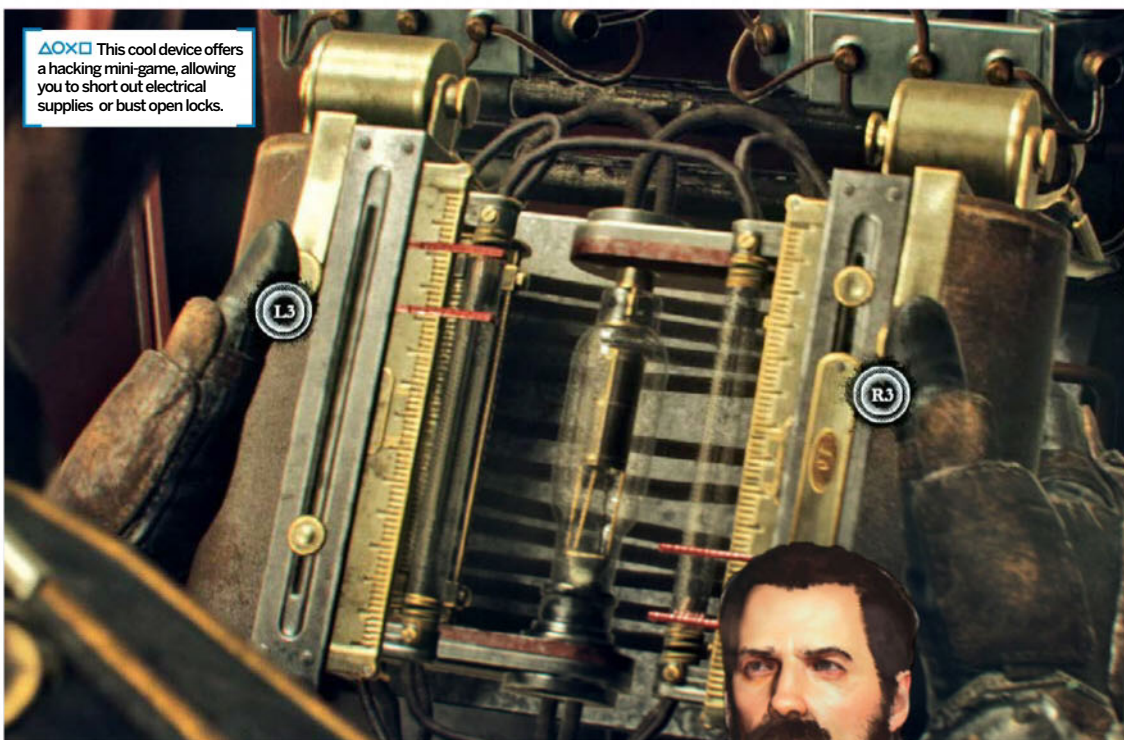
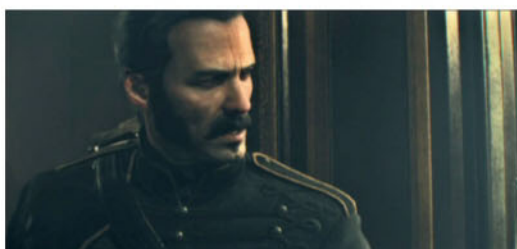
We're yet to go to toe-to-toe with one of the towering lycanthropes that have popped up in the



various trailers, but we have at least been given a glimpse at the QTE-based combat that these battles seem to use heavily. One action sequence aboard the blimp starts with a traditional set of button prompts but then forces you to explore your environment while time gradually slows to a near halt – the sequence we experienced only had one environmental object with which to interact but it stands to reason that encounters beyond this early one could offer multiple options that each further the brawl in a different way. There's certainly enough involvement there to ensure that these moments are satisfying and cinematic already, but such choice, however arbitrary it may turn out to be, would be the icing on the cake.

We get that *The Order* is a cinematic game but even so, that it has taken this long for Sony to lift the lid on actual gameplay is somewhat surprising, especially given that what we've played is really rather good. If it were a game purely trying to get by on slick visuals and Hollywood moments, we could perhaps understand it. But gameplay holds

△×□ This cool device offers a hacking mini-game, allowing you to short out electrical supplies or bust open locks.



up well in spite of some fairly old-fashioned design decisions, and even the assertion that it's 'just a steampunk *Gears Of War*' is hardly a solid criticism – *Gears* is one of the few great franchises that PlayStation has never had an answer for, so what better time for that answer to come along than when Epic's series seems to have run its course and the well dried up?

Hopefully the stealth sections we saw were the exception rather than the rule, because general gunplay is more than strong enough to support a full game, especially one that looks this damn good. At worst, we're looking at a visually stunning shooter with a cool setting, satisfying weapons and somewhat linear design. Doesn't sound like too bad a start to 2015 to us...

Luke Albigés

WHAT YOU'RE SAYING...

It's got Lycans in it. And massive moustaches. And it's set in Victorian London.. What's not to be excited about?
@Alcaze

I'm trying to be excited by it. But lack of story, dull gameplay, dodgy AI and hand holding have put me off a bit.
@ytevo79

steam punk alternate history Victorian London? Of course. Oh and moustaches. :D
@Salsenberg

Be very wary and do not preorder. Another hyped up mess.
@Shelby67GT

THE ORDER:1886 is getting one last comb, wax and twirl at Ready At Dawn in order to be presentable any day now. Check the website for more info: www.readyatdawn.com

ETA 2016 | DEV GIANT SPARROW | PUB SONY | TWITTER @GIANTSPARROW

What Remains Of Edith Finch

A blessing or a curse?



GIANT SPARROW'S INTRIGUING

trailer for *What Remains Of Edith Finch* might have misled you somewhat. By the studio's own

admission, the game's dark and mysterious reveal is likely to lead people to think that it is a horror game. Giant Sparrow says that while there is enough element of that in *Edith Finch*, to call it a horror title is to apply a label doesn't quite represent what the game really is.

Spanning from 1900 to the present day, *What Remains Of Edith Finch* is constructed as a collection of short stories that will let us step into the shoes of the various members of the cursed Finch family. What with them being cursed and all, each story will end with a family member dying – though perhaps Edith, the last living Finch, will find a way to escape her fate as she investigates her family history.

Again, we're venturing in to what sounds like horror territory, but Giant Sparrow says that the game isn't being designed specifically to scare people. Rather, the game is intended to be evocative of the sublime – an encounter with something that's both beautiful and terrifying by virtue of the fact that it is unknowable. Indeed, the game is inspired in part by weird fiction authors like Lovecraft and Borges, intimately concerned as they are with the unknown.

Another important feature of the game is the way that it contrasts the human and natural world, embodied in the opposition between the Finch family house and the forests that surround it. The house is not intended to feel like a 'haunted house', but a place that's familiar, a place that feels like it's lived in. In opposition to that, the deep forests that encircle the house are intended to breed a sense of unfamiliarity that makes you feel ill at ease. Trees are deliberately grouped close together to make the forest difficult to make out, giving the impression that it's hiding something. Similarly, the tree's textures are painterly, the intention being that they create a certain sense of irreality that helps foster the forest's mysterious character.

It's fascinating to hear how much thought Giant Sparrow is putting into the design of *What Remains Of Edith Finch*'s world, how it wants to



"IT'S FASCINATING TO HEAR HOW MUCH THOUGHT GIANT SPARROW IS PUTTING INTO THE DESIGN OF EDITH FINCH'S WORLD"

ensure that its thematics permeate every aspect of the game. It is not really a surprise, then, that the studio is approaching its work that way, given that its last game was *The Unfinished Swan*. This is a studio that is very much focused on crafting an overall experience, or creating games that spark certain feelings or emotions in the player. In that regard, it makes sense that the studio is carefully crafting *What Remains Of Edith Finch* around a particular theme – the unknown, and those uneasy emotions that we may experience when we confront it.

In other ways, though, *What Remains Of Edith Finch* is very much a departure from what Giant Sparrow has done previously. Despite its surreal and pseudo-mystical bent, *What Remains Of Edith Finch* is far more grounded than the conceptual *The Unfinished Swan*. It is also far more narratively focused than Giant Sparrow's last game, so it will be interesting to see whether the studio is as good at writing dialogue, creating

believable characters and crafting an engaging mystery story as it is at building beautiful worlds.

Giant Sparrow has shown that it's got interesting ideas and artistic flair with *The Unfinished Swan*, and that makes us excited to see what the studio does with its new PS4 exclusive. That's only enhanced when we hear the studio talk about the game, demonstrating as it does that it has a clear and intelligent vision for *Edith Finch* and has put a great deal of thought into how best to achieve what it envisions for the game. Granted, we know very little about how the game plays and we'd love to know more before we make any judgements, but the clarity of Giant Sparrow's vision provides a solid base that gives us cause for optimism.

Paul Walker-Emig

A little bird told us that **WHAT REMAINS OF EDITH FINCH** is being developed by Giant Sparrow. Check the website for more details: www.giantsparrow.com

AOXO The opposition between the familiarity of Finch's house and the unfamiliarity of nature will be a key part of the game.

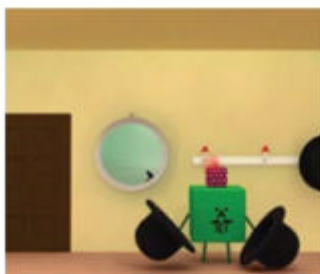


WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- It's being developed by the team behind *The Unfinished Swan*, *Giant Sparrow*.
- It's set in Washington State and inspired by the region's forests and mountains.
- Giant Sparrow says it's about encountering forces beyond our ability to understand.
- You get to control different characters in different time periods.

MARRIAGE MADE IN HEAVEN

What Remains Of Edith Finch is just one of a number of games being developed in collaboration with Sony Santa Monica. The studio is also helping these titles get ready for release on PS4...



WATTAM

We don't know much about *Wattam*, other than it's all about making connections and that developers who worked on *Katamari Damacy* are involved. That's enough for us.



EVERYBODY'S GONE TO THE RAPTURE

This incredible looking story-driven exploration game is being made by The Chinese Room, who previously made the compelling *Dear Esther*.



FAT PRINCESS ADVENTURES

The *Fat Princess* series is going to be making its debut on the PS4 in the form of four-player co-op action strategy game *Fat Princess Adventures*.

AOXO We don't think they had planning permission for some of these additions to the Finch household...



ETA Q3 2015 | PUB SONY | DEV SUPERMASSIVE GAMES | TWITTER @SUPERMIGAMES

Until Dawn

Save the cheerleader, save the world



ONE OF THE trickiest tasks in the lead-up to any new game is separating the realistic, achievable target features from the PR bullshit. A

lot of it comes down to pedigree, or at least that's the easiest way to get a rough feel for whether the hype train will reach its destination intact. When Naughty Dog promises the moon on a stick, for instance, the fact that it has *The Last Of Us* and *Uncharted* to back up its promises makes them all that much easier to swallow, while an unproven studio has to work a lot harder to make us believe in its ambitious plans. So when we hear that the team responsible for *Doctor Who: The Eternity Clock* and Move game-beltch *Start The Party* is looking to try its hand at the same formula Quantic Dream has been struggling to convincingly get right for over a decade, it's perhaps understandable that we should go into *Until Dawn* dual-wielding salt shakers.

The concept is simple enough – it's your regular teen horror 'eight teenagers take a holiday in a creepy old cabin because YOLO' setup, but things obviously go south pretty sharpish as it becomes clear that someone doesn't want them to have a nice time. We recall suggesting that it may be a horror *Heavy Rain* mere moments after its announcement and having finally picked up a controller, that appraisal is spot on. Gameplay is a blend of point-and-click style exploration, Telltale-esque binary decisions that all have lasting effects on the way the narrative plays out and QTEs when it all kicks off, again with performance impacting on each character's fate. Apparently, all eight can live or die, the story playing out differently should any of the hateful little shits kick the bucket before the credits roll. It's a mammoth task and no mistake but after playing through the latest demo section twice with different decisions and almost exactly the same outcome, we're left wondering whether the team chose the wrong part of the game to show off or if it has maybe just borrowed a handful of mirrors and a few wisps of smoke off Telltale to help build the illusion of choice and consequence.

Our playthrough begins some way into the game, with *Heroes'* version of Wolverine relaxing in the bath. Startled by a loud noise, she emerges to find

all her friends missing and goes off to investigate in a towel. Supermassive has clearly nailed the idiot teenager characters that populate the films it is aiming to replicate and sure enough, a masked asshole smashes through a door and gameplay goes from gentle exploration to time-based decision-making in the blink of an eye. Devoid of context, it's hard for us to know whether we should be putting Sam's 'International Hide And Seek Champion 2010' experience to use in order to avoid capture or just pegging it to make use of the superhuman speed she may or may not have – decisions are effectively arbitrary with no grounds on which to base them, although they don't appear to make all that much difference in this sequence anyway. Choose to run and you'll simply skip the hiding 'mini-game' (read: hold the controller still), which basically just offers an extra way to get caught should you fail. Even failing a QTE where she stumbles down the stairs doesn't seem to have any impact – the next part looks to play out the same either way after the brief panic – but again, this could simply be a problem with taking one section of an ambitious and complex gaming web in isolation.

You only need to look at *Heavy Rain* or any recent Telltale game to see that this approach really doesn't hold up to repeated plays, nor can one short sequence tell you all that much about the game as a whole. It could be that choices and failures here don't come back to haunt you until beyond the section we played – a sprained ankle from falling down the stairs impairing Sam for later trials or whatever – but it's just incredibly hard to tell at this point. It all looks smart enough, an enhanced version of *Killzone's* engine doing its job admirably and the gesture-based decisions, arbitrary as they may be, serve their purpose. We just haven't seen enough yet. The concept is neat and controls fairly tight – we're just going to have to wait on the full version to see how much of the ambition of the narrative web is real and how much is falsified.

Luke Albigés

UNTIL DAWN is being guided to safety by the fine folk at Supermassive Games, whose site you can check out here: www.supermassivegames.com

AOXO We're not sure what arbitrary sequence of events (if any) leads to Sam not getting gassed at the end...

"IT'S YOUR REGULAR TEEN HORROR 'EIGHT TEENAGERS TAKE A HOLIDAY IN A CABIN BECAUSE YOLO' SETUP"



WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?



A narrative with choices that matter and characters who can die at any time.



Well, that's the plan, anyway – the section we played didn't demonstrate this well.



Faces like Hayden Panettiere and Rami Malek lend star power to the game.



The next Quantic Dream game won't be out until 2027, so this will help fill the gap.

△○×□ We'd be pretty freaked out if a member of Slipknot watched us while we were in the bath, to be fair.





SHARE THIS



FEAR OF THE DARK

Let the world know what horrors you encounter deep below Yharnam

Your experiences in the Chalice Dungeons are there to be shared with the wider community, as by their very nature no two trips will ever be the same. Whatever horrors await you far below the streets of Yharnam will

depend entirely on how rude the game is feeling, and this makes each trip perfect fodder for mashing that Share button in a panic when you discover that room full of *spiders*. It's an action-RPG – there are always spiders.



WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?



It offers the same brutal game design that From Software has become known for.



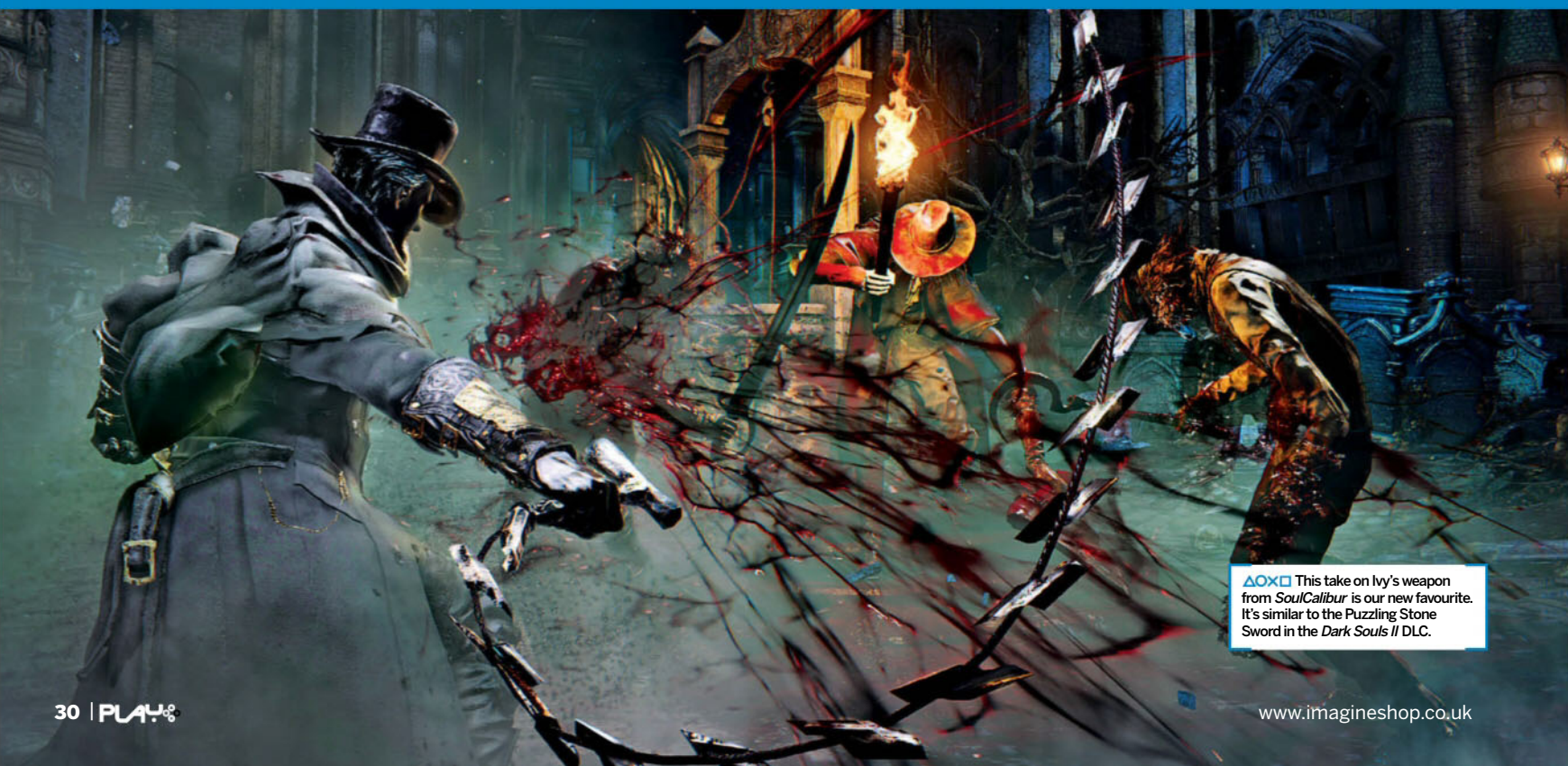
Emphasis on what will hopefully be a slightly tighter co-op experience.



The Chalice Dungeons add a whole new and exciting element to the game.



Another great PS4 exclusive, and one that won't leave our machines for months.



△×○ This take on Ivy's weapon from *SoulCalibur* is our new favourite. It's similar to the Puzzling Stone Sword in the *Dark Souls II* DLC.



ETA 24 MARCH | DEV FROM SOFTWARE | PUB SONY | TWITTER @BLOODBORNE_PS4

Bloodborne

Better the devil you know



IT FEELS LIKE we've been waiting forever, but the most exciting exclusive to hit PS4 so far is very much on the horizon. A few lucky buggers (us included) were able to spend a fair bit of time with the Alpha a few months back, but our proper introduction to the grim worlds, terrifying monsters and plain bloody difficult gameplay on PS4 can't come soon enough at this point. We've already booked time off work.

But despite our collective salivating over the prospect of a brand new exclusive From Software RPG hitting PS4, not much has yet been said about *Bloodborne*'s multiplayer component, which, if *Dark Souls* is anything to go by, will prove to be an extremely important facet of the game. After all, despite its decidedly laggy disposition, a lot of the hardcore still play *Dark Souls* purely so they can fight each other online. According to recent reports, *Bloodborne* will feature a co-op mode that sounds pretty much the same as summoning in the *Souls* games, wherein you can leave behind a bell (as seen in gameplay trailers since the game's announcement) that can be used by others to summon you for help in clearing out an area of their game world, and for help in fighting bosses. We'd complain here about how nothing new seems to be

on offer, but From Software's pioneering summon/invoke/troll mechanics are more interesting than most other multiplayer experiences out there when at their best, so we can't be too critical.

So far, so *Souls*, yet an interesting development in the ongoing *Bloodborne* mystery is the inclusion of the Chalice Dungeons. As if it didn't look hard enough, *Bloodborne* will feature randomly generated dungeons for you to scrap it out in, either alone or with other players in jolly cooperation. From footage that has emerged of the dungeons, it appears that they'll feature a swathe of different enemies, traps, and possibly boss fights, and with the promise that the dungeons will be different every time comes the promise of a nicely elongated playing experience. Not that we need an excuse to put 100 hours into it when it hits the shelves...

Visiting a Chalice Dungeon requires the use of some sort of consumable item, and at present it's unclear how many of these will be available in-game. In an ideal world they'd be plentiful enough that you could visit whenever you want (or just a reusable item like the Darksign from *Dark Souls*), but we can potentially see there being some sort of cap unless you're looking to be summoned by another player.

What it will offer for sure is a legitimately harder experience as time wears on. After three or four

playthroughs of *Dark Souls*, we found ourselves running at least half the game without dying, even on NG+, due to our now almost telepathic knowledge of every enemy and area in the game. Although we still love playing it, it hasn't done the difficulty many favours, and that's where randomly-generated dungeons will potentially make *Bloodborne* the superior experience as you settle in to a comfortable routine of OneBro runs and NG+7 boss fights. Maybe.

It's not like this is the first game with randomly generated stuff this year – let alone this *week* if you're on point with your obscure PC indie games – but it's the fact that no-one could have called it and yet how much of a perfect fit it is for a game like *Bloodborne* to have this sort of component that has made us even more excited than we already were. In addition, being able to share your Chalice Dungeons and play through other peoples' provides another added layer of longevity that should see us still playing *Bloodborne* come Christmas, which sounds perfect.

Steve Holmes

BLOODBORNE is achieving victory over at From Software. Hit up playstation.com/en-us/games/bloodborne-ps4 for more info.

ΔOXD The Cleric Demon is a bitch to fight, not least because of its shrill scream that seems to hit the perfect pitch to break your concentration.

"WHAT IT WILL OFFER FOR SURE IS A LEGITIMATELY HARDER EXPERIENCE AS TIME WEARS ON"



ETA 20 MARCH

PUB SQUARE ENIX

DEV IN-HOUSE

TWITTER @SQUAREENIX

Final Fantasy Type-0 HD

The PSP game that's had a bath



IF WE'RE HONEST, up until recently, the thing that most excited us about *Final Fantasy Type-0 HD* was that buying it means we'll also be given access to a demo of *Final Fantasy XV*. After having some decent hands-on time with *Type-0 HD*, however, we realise we've been grossly unfair to the game, because it deserves to be viewed as more than a means by which to get a sneak peak at *Final Fantasy XV*.

Part of what's won us over is the degree to which we found the game to be evocative of one of our favourite *Final Fantasy* games: *Final Fantasy VIII*. Roaming around the elite military school in which protagonists Class Zero are enrolled, all prettified in HD, we couldn't help but be reminded of Balamb Garden. The appeal of that isn't just about nostalgia; there's something about the high-school atmosphere of *Type-0 HD*, as well as the school's sense of place, that drew us in. Think of it as a Hogwarts for JRPG fans.

Continuing on that high-school theme, it's worth noting that *Type-0 HD* contains some of

the social systems that you might be familiar with from the high-school JRPG, *Persona 4*. That is, while you're in the academy between the campaign missions, you have a certain amount of free time to spend. There will be various activities for you to choose from, with each taking a number of hours off your total free time for that day. That proved to be a great way of building your relationships with characters and structuring your progress in *Persona 4* – we can only hope that is also the case in *Type-0 HD*.

The meat of the game, however, is to be found in campaign missions. The game's mission-based composition makes it feel different to other *Final Fantasy* games, associated as they tend to be with a more open structure. That's not necessarily a bad thing; *Type-0 HD* is a game that's divided into digestible chunks, a game that's designed to be thought of as segmented, where you're doing your best to maximise your ranking in the particular section you're playing.

In terms of its combat, *Type-0 HD* favours a more action-based style, closer to *Lightning*

Returns or *Kingdom Hearts* than it is to the older, menu-based *Final Fantasy* games. Each character has their own unique weapon and associated special attacks, which lends a bit of variety to the combat in that different characters are better suited for different approaches (you can cycle through your party at will). Each character's style of combat also impacts on one of *Type-0 HD*'s key combat systems – Break Strikes and Kill Strikes (essentially critical hits).

As with Squall's various Gunblades in *Final Fantasy VIII*, you can increase the damage of attacks by timing them correctly. On-screen prompts will appear when your foes are vulnerable to a critical hit and timing an attack to coincide with that will either kill your enemy instantly, or result in massive damage. Naturally, when using, for example, a ranged rather than melee character, the timing you need to master for critical hits will vary significantly. Switching characters in order to make use of their abilities and successfully timing critical hits for huge damage can make *Type-0 HD*'s combat very

THE GAME THEY BOUGHT THE DEMO THEY WANTED

Publishers bundling early demos with games is nothing new, you know...

THE GAME

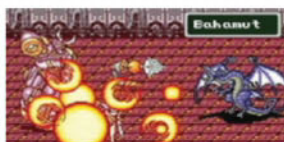


ZONE OF THE ENDERS

THE DEMO



METAL GEAR SOLID 2



FINAL FANTASY ANTHOLOGY



FINAL FANTASY X



TEKKEN HYBRID



TEKKEN TAG TOURNAMENT 2

ΔOX□ Rem is a new recruit to Class Zero. She is a spell-focused character with high magic-related stats and abilities that restore MP.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

△ Square Enix says it has a darker tone than other *Final Fantasy* games.

○ It gives fans a chance to experience a game previously only released in Japan.

× You take control of powerful summons – Eidolons in the game's parlance.

○ *Type-0*'s military academy reminds us of *Final Fantasy VIII*'s Balamb Garden.

satisfying, at least in the little that we've been able to play. Whether combat will remain engaging over the course of the game remains to be seen.

Having pointed out a number of similarities and differences between *Type-0 HD* and its brethren, it should become apparent that the game occupies the odd position of feeling like a title that's simultaneously within the lineage of *Final Fantasy*, but that also deviates from the standard formula in a number of significant ways. That makes it a *Final Fantasy* game that's interesting to us. Indeed, when you take into account the positive reception *Type-0* received on its original Japanese release, we suspect that anyone who is going in to this game simply to get at that aforementioned *Final Fantasy XV* demo could end up being surprised by the quality they find in the actual game they are purchasing.

Paul Walker-Emig

FINAL FANTASY TYPE-0 HD is being summoned by Square Enix. Check the website for more details: finalfantasytype0.com

“THINK OF IT AS A HOGWARTS FOR JRPG FANS”



ΔOX□ Action-heavy combat offers a delicious taste of how *FFXV* will most likely play. We can't wait...

ETA 17 MARCH

DEV SLIGHTLY MAD STUDIOS

PUB SLIGHTLY MAD STUDIOS

TWITTER @PROJECTCARGAME

Project Cars

The ultimate racing sim has the ultimate race



THIS IS BIG. As if the impending release of *Project Cars* wasn't exciting enough for us simulated petrol heads, Slightly Mad Studios' recent location reveal just made us whimper.

This pure-bred racing sim, which feels like a part stripped-out *Gran Turismo*, free of all of that game's fluff, and a *Need For Speed* on, erm, speed, is playing a fantastic teasing game leading up to its March release. The latest location reveal added four established race tracks to its roster, the UK's Snetterton and Donington Park will undoubtedly be used for the game's touring car races, Laguna Seca's infamous corkscrew will be

here to make karting even more daunting than it already was; and then. And then. There is Le Mans. All 24 hours of it. With all 55 cars on the grid. [insert louder whimper here]

To hell with your protracted *EVE Online* space battles. Screw your *Ocarina Of Time*. We don't even care, *Minecraft*. We're getting our friends over (both of them), we're stocking up on the worst energy drinks we can find and we're doing the whole damn 24 hours.

Sure, *Gran Turismo* and a few others have had a real-time Le Mans. But none of these have even dared to pit us against the full roster of 54 on-track opponents in doing so.

In a game designed for persistence and endurance, this may be the ultimate racing sim milestone yet. We'll probably never finish due to our inexplicable attraction to walls and opposing cars' bumpers, but it won't stop us trying.

This is a bold statement of intent from the developer. *Project Cars* is supposed to be the pure, immersive racing sim we've never really had. For all its allure, the sheer amount of mind-numbing Toyota Vitz tournaments and tiny hatchbacks before getting to the proper juicy stuff in *Gran Turismo 5* and *6* wore us down more than harden us. And when we qualified on pole driving a Force India in the first race on a supposedly

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?



It's the racing equivalent of *Skylim*: immersive but simple at its very core.



No on-screen HUD, no artificial 'progress points' – just pure racing.

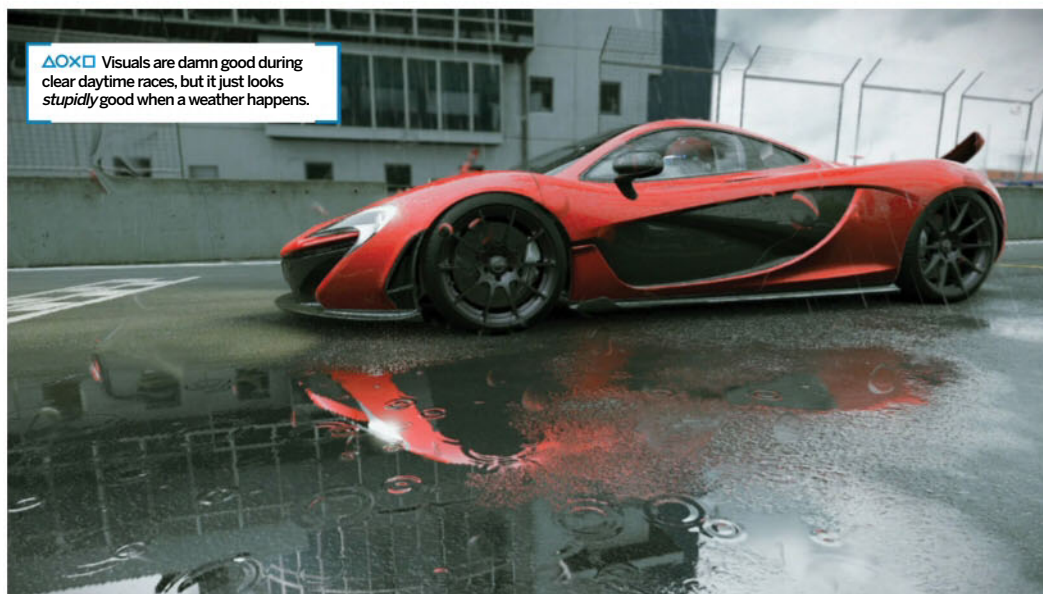


Choose your starting path, and your success, or failure, decides where you go from there.

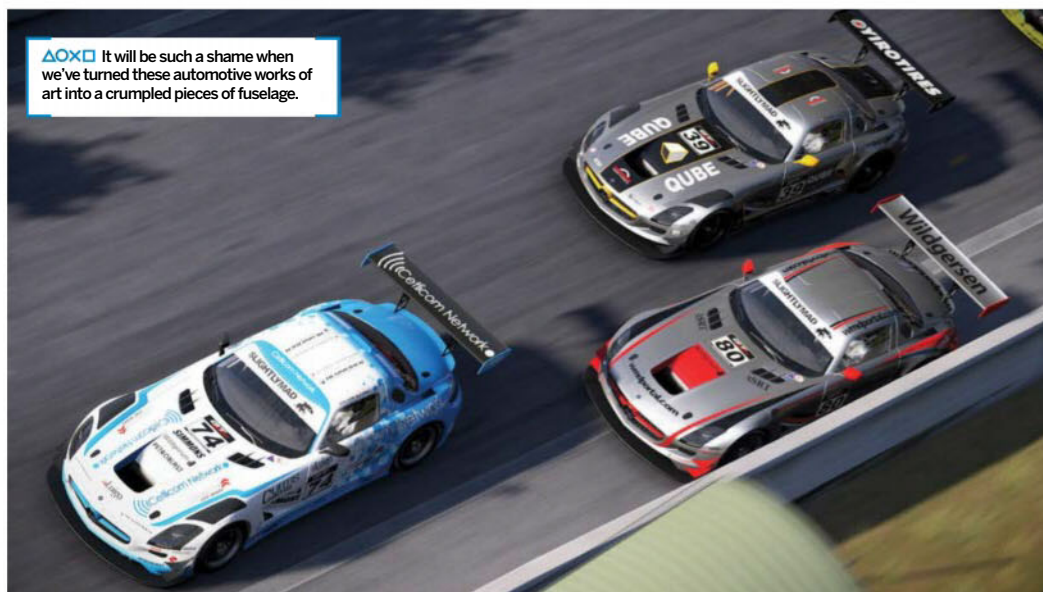


It will feature the Le Mans 24-hour race, with a full 55-car starting grid.

“WE’RE GETTING OUR FRIENDS OVER (BOTH OF THEM), WE’RE STOCKING UP ON THE WORST ENERGY DRINKS WE CAN FIND AND WE’RE DOING THE WHOLE DAMN LE MANS 24-HOUR RACE”



ΔOXD Visuals are damn good during clear daytime races, but it just looks stupidly good when a weather happens.



ΔOXD It will be such a shame when we've turned these automotive works of art into a crumpled pieces of fuselage.



'hard' setting, after *crashing* into a wall doing so in the last *F1* game we can remember being interested in, we just turned the console off in pure disbelief.

So seeing the no-HUD, no-progress-points, no-bullshit approach with *Project Cars* is a godsend for us sports-game folk. There's a calendar, there's the option of a starting point, and there are races to be won if you want to progress.

Among the many additions to the car line-up, the karts are the most intriguing, if only because of racing games' historical inability to make them either as realistic to control as the cars or as entertaining as *Mario Kart*. There will be two tweakable types on offer; 125cc shifter karts, presumably similar to the ones we saw in *Gran Turismo 6* and more powerful 250cc superkarts, ideal for tearing our limbs off in frustration in the Laguna Seca corkscrew.

In addition to the on-track additions, the introduction of community apps that can extract info from the on-screen action is another step toward the game's authenticity. Apps like *pCars Profiler* and *pCars Telemetry* simulate what a pit crew or race engineer would see, offering in-depth information to analyse performance in frankly absurd detail. The inclusion of allowing community assistance in the development is most obvious here, and since racing games have traditionally only appealed to established racing and car fans, the hardcore approach to *Project Cars* could end up being its ticket to success.

All we care about, though, is getting through 24 hours of the most difficult race on Earth against a full freaking field of opponents without hitting anything too hard. That AI had better be good...

Erlingur Einarsson

SECOND SCREEN Turn your phone into a dashboard

SHIFT

Much like on an F1 car, this app has a flashing shift light that indicates the optimal moment to shift gears.

DIALS

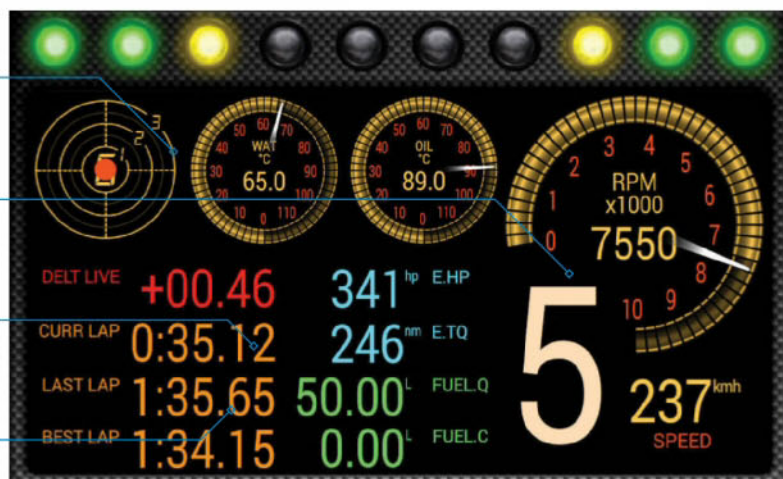
Keep track of the oil and water temperature, as well as brake temperature, with customisable dials.

TELEMETRY

When in the pits, you can save and compare laps, with detailed telemetry of where you can improve your time.

CUSTOMISE

You can add and remove any parameters on the dashboard, edit colours and have several different presets.



THE DRAGON

As you will no doubt have guessed from the name of the games in which Kazuma stars, he is a member of the Yakuza. Kazuma was raised in an orphanage owned by Yakuza boss Kazama, before being inducted into the organisation as a teenager. Rising quickly in the ranks, he would come to be known as "The Dragon Of Dejima", referring to the tattoo on his back.

BIG CITY LIFE

In the space of the five *Yakuza* games, Kazuma finds himself in a variety of locations across Japan. The first game takes place in Kamurocho, a fictionalised version of Shinjuku's red light district, before an Osaka district and Ryukyu are introduced in later games. *Yakuza 5* takes place in five locations, returning to Kamurocho and Osaka, as well as introducing districts set in Sapporo, Fukuoka and Nagoya.

ANATOMY OF... KAZUMA KIRYU

The *Yakuza* series' patchy history when it comes to Western releases has long been a frustration for loyal fans. After years of calling for *Yakuza 5* to hit these shores, fans will finally get their wish when protagonist Kazuma Kiryu returns to the West this year...

YO-YO YAKUZA

Throughout the course of the five *Yakuza* games, Kazuma finds himself in and out of the Yakuza pretty swiftly. From taking the rap for the murder of a Yakuza boss and spending ten years in prison, he ends up as head of the Tojo Clan. He then leaves to run the orphanage in which he was raised, and becomes a taxi driver in between his various stints getting pulled back into the world of crime.

DADDY COOL

Kazuma makes the transition from being a Yakuza to a father figure for the orphaned Haruka, who he comes into contact with due to a connection with a large sum of missing Yakuza cash. It's that relationship that leads him away from crime before he is pulled back in during the events of each game. By the time we reach *Yakuza 5*, Haruka is 16 and pursuing her dream of becoming a pop star.

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Metal Gear Solid V: The Phantom Pain

The day Kojima went mad



ALSO COMING
TO PS3

THIS IS BECOMING ridiculous.

To anyone out there that claims to have seen it coming, you're a liar.

There is no way that anyone could have predicted Hideo Kojima's big Christmas Day troll – the promise of a special Kojima Station screamed of one thing: a release date. Instead, we got a chicken hat and our pal Hideo opening presents. People love to call his supposed genius into question and, to be honest, this time it's hard not to do the same. In turn, it's quite hard not to feel like the great Christmas Day reveal was in fact a solid kick in the crotch.

Still, in lieu of any meaningful announcements the chicken hat does become a little more interesting the more you read into it. Essentially an invisibility cloak, the chicken hat is bestowed upon players that are having a particularly hard time navigating certain portions of the game, allowing you to become invisible to enemy sentries. It seems an odd inclusion in a game primarily based around trying not to be seen, but some people need all the help they can get, right?

What its inclusion does hint at is the scope of the single-player campaign in *The Phantom Pain*, and you can infer that if there's need for what is

essentially a noob hat in the game, there are a few new things for people to learn and adapt to this time out. *Metal Gear* games have never been a walk in the park exactly (and the less said about *Revengeance*'s difficulty, the better), but there was always the trusty tranquiliser gun to fall back on. The new emphasis on open-world stealth in *MGSV* will surely bring with it more difficulty. After all, it's easy to hide behind a wall and watch enemy patterns until you can find a window to leave cover, but if you're caught short in the middle of the desert it becomes tough to get yourself hidden. There's always a cardboard box, we suppose.

“THE CHICKEN HAT DOES BECOME A LITTLE MORE INTERESTING THE MORE YOU LOOK INTO IT”





SHARE THIS

WHAT ARE YOU... CHICKEN?

Snakes don't belong in Afghanistan

Obviously it's hard to imagine what Hideo Kojima has in store for us come launch date, but we can make do with the most ridiculous situations for ever thinking to hide in a cardboard box when it comes to the Share button. So

step up – send us pictures of cardboard boxes sat in the middle of the desert. Show us boxes sneaking up on ignorant sentries and working them over with a combat knife. Or, just wear the chicken hat during a pivotal cutscene.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?



Open-world stealth offers a brand new approach to an already polished series.



Mother Base invasions allow PvP play without dragging you out of the game.



Metal Gear Online looks to be full of features and will augment the main game nicely.



The chicken hat should allow novice players to pick up the basics far easier.



△×○ Kojima trolling aside, we are more excited than ever.

Overall, what is becoming abundantly clear now is just how much game there is here. Even with a single-player component that promises to be absolutely huge, *MGSV* also has Mother Base invasions and *Metal Gear Online*. It's not entirely clear how base invasions work yet, although it seems logical that it'll be an option available to you while you're running round Afghanistan looking for Kaz in the main game. Once again, it seems likely that you'll be notified in-game of anyone breaking into your Mother Base and stealing your shit, allowing you to be picked up by helicopter and flown home to protect the fruits of all that *crucial* time you've spent stockpiling livestock using the Fulton Recovery System. *Metal Gear Online* looks pretty expansive, too, and also enjoyed an exciting reveal late last year.

But where's the release date? We can't remember many games that have encouraged this much hype (*The Last Guardian* notwithstanding, and guess what, *that* isn't happening for a long time) while still occupying a wholly enigmatic space in the industry. Kojima won't tell us until he feels like it – even Konami doesn't have the power to tell that man when his

game needs to be released. Hell, for all we know it might already be out. Pictures have been leaked of the game entering play-testing, and to us that could hint at a summer release, judging by the time it took for *MGS4* to appear after testing.

But with all the mystery comes gossip. Search for *The Phantom Pain* online and look for the forum posts – there's no end to how many questions surround this game. Eli has to be Liquid Snake, surely? Why is Ocelot being a bit nice? Where the hell is Decoy Octopus? Why is Volgin in it? It's irresistible – the sooner we know, the better, by all accounts. But, at the end of the day, isn't all this mystery just *perfect*? And again, at the end of the day, isn't it clear that, despite Hideo Kojima's predilection for the absurd, *The Phantom Pain* still looks like it could be one of the best games we'll ever see? At the end of the E3 2014 trailer, Snake says "I'll always be with you" – we can't help but hope that he hurries it up a bit.

Steve Holmes

METAL GEAR SOLID V is defying sense with the help of Konami. Sneak over to www.konami.jp/mgs5/tpp for more potentially useless intel.

CULT CLASSIC

When it comes to LucasArts adventure games, the *Monkey Island* games are the ones that tend to be front and centre in peoples' minds. Don't get us wrong, those games are great, but the often overlooked *Day Of The Tentacle* is an equally brilliant example of the best of the LucasArts adventure games of the Nineties. For that reason, the news that a remastered version of this classic is coming to PS4 and PS Vita later on this year is music to our ears.

A LEGEND RETURNS

Double Fine boss Tim Schafer will be delighted to have the opportunity to re-release *Day of the Tentacle*, the reason being that it is the first game he directed, alongside Dave Grossman. Other LucasArts alumni who worked on the project include Ron Gilbert and Peter Chan. That Disney and Lucasfilm allowed Double Fine to remake *Day Of The Tentacle* and *Grim Fandango* gives us hope that we could see more classics remade, such as Schafer's *Full Throttle*.

TIME TRAVELLING TOILETS

Day Of The Tentacle sees its protagonists – Bernard, Laverne and Hoagie – sent through time using time-travelling toilets in order to stop the villainous Purple Tentacle transforming and taking over the world. Things go wrong, however, with Bernard ending up in the present, Laverne ending up 200 years into a tentacle-controlled future and Hoagie in the time of the US' founding fathers.

MANIAC MANSION

Originally released in 1993, *Day Of The Tentacle* was a sequel to point and click adventure *Maniac Mansion*, released in 1987. One of *Day Of The Tentacle*'s three protagonists, a stereotypical geek named Bernard, is a returning character from *Maniac Mansion*, while oddball medical student Laverne and metal-loving slob Hoagie are new additions. Interestingly, the full version of *Maniac Mansion* is available to play in *Day Of The Tentacle* via a computer that you can find in the game. We hope that's still a feature in the new version.

SCUMM

Day Of The Tentacle uses the SCUMM engine that LucasArts also used for the first two *Monkey Island* games and *Indiana Jones And The Last Crusade*, to name but a few. For those not in the know, that basically means that you have a list of verbs that you use to interact with the world, such as 'Talk to', 'Look at', 'Push' and 'Pull'. It'll be interesting to see how that's implemented on the PS4, but the gameplay system should be an ideal fit for the Vita's touchscreen.

PRESERVING THE PAST



You might remember that the re-release of the first two *Monkey Island* games allowed you to switch between classic visuals and a retouched version. If you're anything like us, you preferred the former and will similarly want to see *Day Of The Tentacle*'s original look preserved.



From what Tim Schafer has said, it doesn't sound like we have much to worry about. *Day Of The Tentacle* seems set to retain its original, brilliant, Chuck Avery-inspired cartoon visuals.



It would, however, be nice to see some other special features included in the PS4 and Vita release. Double Fine's re-release of *Grim Fandango* includes an audio commentary from its creators and it would be great to see something similar in this game, too. Those guys are pretty funny.



Another welcome inclusion would be an optional hint system to lend a helping hand when you get stuck. The *Monkey Island* special editions included such a system and we see no reason not to implement a similar feature in *Day Of The Tentacle*.

Instant Expert

ETA Q2 2015 | DEV DOUBLE FINE | PUB DOUBLE FINE

Day Of The Tentacle

PS4

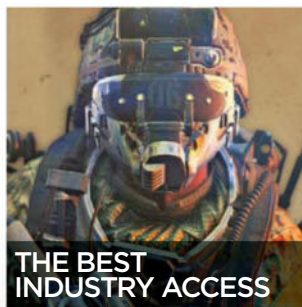
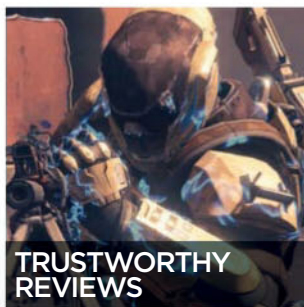
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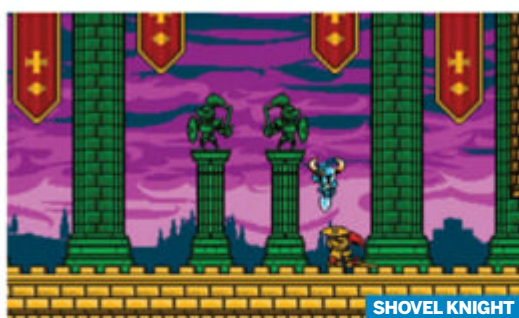
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PREVIEW ROUND-UP



WE'VE GOT SOMETHING of an indie special for you in this month's preview round-up. The first game we're looking at is the acclaimed **SHOVEL KNIGHT**, which will be coming to PS4 and Vita later this year. This 2D platformer is something of a love letter to the 8-bit classics, both in terms of its retro visual style and its gameplay systems. A wonderfully evocative chiptune soundtrack and little hat-tips to games of yore further enhance its status as a faithful tribute to videogame history. Don't be fooled into thinking that this game is simply a vehicle for nostalgia, though, because by all accounts, it's an excellent game in its own right. In case you're wondering about the title, it refers to the fact that the eponymous Shovel Knight wields a shovel (obviously) that he uses to attack enemies, and dig up treasures. We can't finish without saying that the PlayStation versions of *Shovel Knight* will have a cool addition – *God Of War*'s Kratos as a boss!

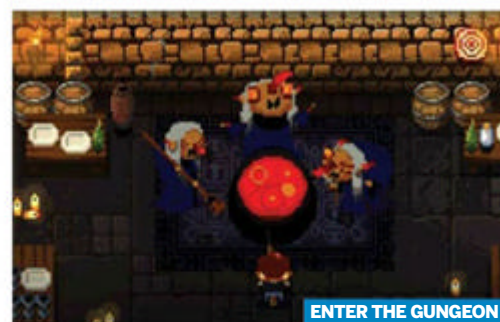
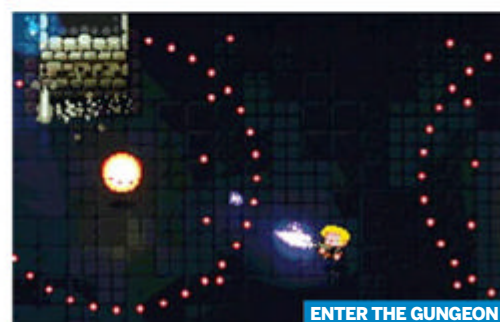
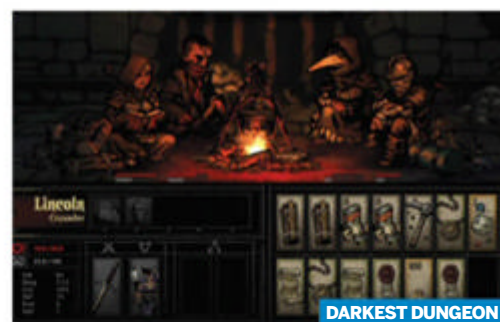
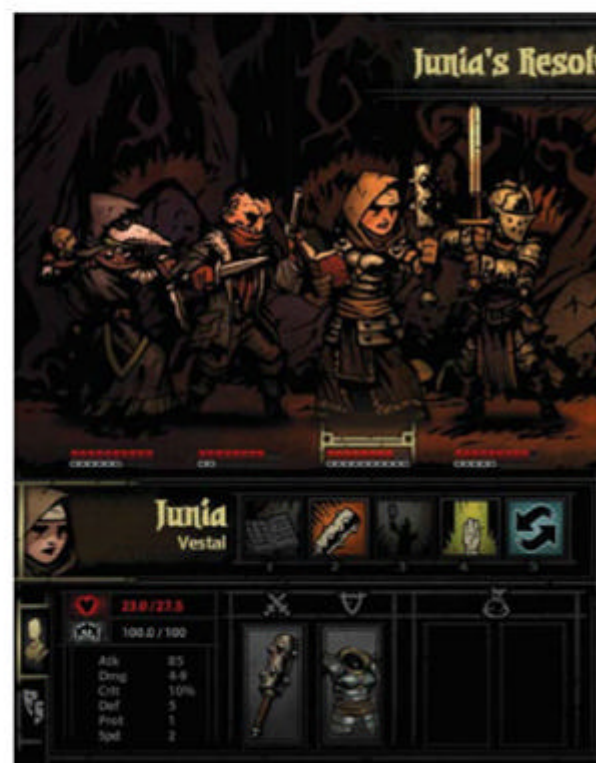
Our next game doesn't have the humorous tone of *Shovel Knight* but is still all about folks in armour duking it out in a 2D sidescroller. The difference



with **DARKEST DUNGEON** is that it is not an action game, but a hardcore, turn-based RPG. An intriguing feature of this dark dungeon crawler, again coming to PS4 this year, is that your characters can respond emotionally to the things they encounter and may need to be sent off to recover before returning to your party. To give an example, it is possible for a party member to start going on "nihilistic rants", to quote the game's developers, after seeing too many party members die and unsettling your other comrades as a result. You can either send your traumatised comrade off into town to go on a binge and blow off some steam, or send them to the sanitarium until they recover.

Let's switch the tone yet again as we move onto another dungeon-themed PS4 game, **ENTER THE GUNGEON**. As you can probably guess, this fast paced action game is all about the guns. And the loot. But mainly the guns. If you needed evidence of that, just look to the fact that *Enter The Gungeon* includes weapons that fire nails, fish, rainbows, foam darts, mail, cannonballs, genies, bees, lasers, magic, rockets and bullets, amongst other things. The game looks like a wonderfully silly and spectacular twin-stick shooter and is certainly one we're looking forward to playing soon. Did we mention that the objective of the game is to obtain a gun so powerful that it can kill the past? Wonderful.

Speaking of manipulating time, **SUPER TIME FORCE ULTRA** is a game that places that at its core. This 2D action game allows you to rewind time at any point. The interesting thing, though, is





“SONY BOSS SHUHEI YOSHIDA IS A PLAYABLE CHARACTER, EQUIPPED WITH A PHONE THAT FIRES DEADLY TWEETS”



that the actions you performed before you rewind time still play out the next time around, allowing you to effectively have multiple runs playing at the same time. This adds an extra dimension to what is already an excellent action game, presenting you with scenarios that require you to use your time rewinding abilities to take down enemies that would otherwise be impossible to defeat. Surely the best thing about the PlayStation versions of this action game, though, is that Sony boss Shuhei Yoshida is a playable character, equipped with a phone that fires deadly tweets. Who doesn't love Shu?

We started this round-up with a game about a character with a spade and we're ending it with a game about a character with a spade. **SKYTORN** is a 2D, action adventure game set in the ruins of a fallen world. Protagonist Névoa is an explorer that has taken to the skies in the wake of a cataclysm that has destroyed earth. The spade that she wields seems to be used to dig through certain areas and as a weapon to take down the monsters.



NO MAN'S SKY

AS AMAZING AS the other indie games in our round-up are looking, it's easy to believe that they're made by small teams. *No Man's Sky*, however, is a game that's holding its own on the stage next to the big boys without looking out of place for one second. We get that the universe of *No Man's Sky* is procedurally generated and all, but it's still hard to fathom that a game this huge is being made by a team that's composed of around 10-15 people.

Speaking of the game's scale, it was an attempt to communicate just how big *No Man's Sky* is that formed the basis of the game's showing at PlayStation Experience. The trailer showed a player flying on a planet, before zooming out to show that location on a map. The camera then zoomed out through thousands upon thousands of stars before

AVAILABLE ON: PS4 **RELEASE DATE:** 2015

setting on another location and zooming in to show us a new planet. The point is to communicate that *No Man's Sky* is inconceivable huge.

Our concern is that we still don't really get what you do in the game that's going to make it interesting. As a piece of technology, *No Man's Sky* is unquestionably incredible; Hello Games has made a universe so big that it's literally impossible for us to see it all, even if the whole human race was to work together. That's fantastic, but what are we going to be *doing* in this universe?

Hello Games is keeping its cards close to its chest in that respect and, in fairness, that's just because it doesn't want to spoil things for us. If we do get an engaging game set within *No Man's Sky*'s beautiful, vast universe, this will be incredible.

THE RISE OF THE CLIFFHANGER

Netflix may have breathed life into serialised TV, but we've got our own episodic revolution going on in videogames. Paul Walker-Emig speaks to the developers behind three episodic games to find out what happens next

IT SPEAKS VOLUMES to the ways that digital distribution has changed the landscape of videogames that one of the most talked about, critically acclaimed and successful games of recent years is a title made by what was a relatively unknown, small studio. We're talking about Telltale's *The Walking Dead*. Vital to its success was its episodic nature, the fact that it could emulate the cliffhanger TV-style of its source material. While it's far from being the first episodic game released, it made an audience that wasn't familiar with the episodic structure take notice and staked a claim for the mainstream appeal of the model.

Fast-forward a couple of years and the episodic model feels well established. There have been plenty of great games made in that style and we've a wealth of interesting episodic games on their way. We spoke to the developers behind three such games, *Life Is Strange* creative director Jean-Maxime Moris, *Dreamfall Chapters* creative director Ragnar Tørnquist and *Resident Evil: Revelations 2* producer Michiteru Okabe about what it is that makes episodic games so appealing, both to developers and to those of us who are playing them.

In a theme that will reemerge, Tørnquist suggests that there are both experiential and practical factors behind the appeal of episodic games. "Episodic or serialised stories have always had great appeal, going back as far as Charles Dickens," Tørnquist tells us. "There's



ΔOXD There's a distinctly European flavour to the world of *Dreamfall*.

something about reading, watching and playing smaller parts of a greater whole that hooks us, emotionally, and makes us anticipate the next part."

"I also think that players – particularly older players, an integral part of our audience – have less and less spare time on their hands to sit down and play long games," Tørnquist says. "By releasing something that's three or four hours every few months, it's easier for players to commit to a game and a story."

Moris concurs with the assertion that the fact that episodic games are built to be experienced in relatively small chunks is a large part of their appeal. "For hardcore gamers like me, there is

that dynamic whereby with all the great games coming out every day, it often feels like there will never be enough time to play everything," he says. "So a game that comes out at 10% of the price of a major release and lasts a shorter, finite number of hours is a great alternative. And if you like it, you can always come back to it when the next episode releases."

"Obviously the TV series boom has been a determining factor in the development of episodic gaming," Moris continues. "Narrative-driven, shorter game experiences have attracted new audiences and brought back adventure game old timers who saw some of the DNA of the games they love in that."





ΔOXΔ The episodic format is quickly becoming a common approach for adventure games.



ΔOXΔ *Life Is Strange* adds a twist to the choice-driven gameplay that's associated with episodic gaming, allowing you to rewind time and experiment with different outcomes.

PREVIOUSLY ON...

What happened last time around?

THE LONGEST JOURNEY

DREAMFALL CHAPTERS IS the third entry in the *The Longest Journey* series, which started back in 1999, though you can play it without prior knowledge of those games. The series seemed dead until Red Thread Games successfully kickstarted *Dreamfall Chapters* to continue the story of Zoë Castillo where *Dreamfall: The Longest Journey* left off back in 2006.

REMEMBER ME

DONTNOD'S PREVIOUS TITLE was third-person action game *Remember Me*. In most aspects, story-driven adventure title *Life Is Strange* couldn't be more different, but they do share one similarity. *Remember Me* included a memory remixing mechanic that allowed you to fast-forward and rewind memories as you edited them. A similar mechanic will appear in *Life Is Strange*.

RESIDENT EVIL

THE PREVIOUS RESIDENT *Evil: Revelations* game wasn't released episodically, but it was structured in a such a way that moving to an episodic model makes sense. On the *Resident Evil* timeline, *Revelations 2*'s story takes place between the events of *Resident Evil 5* and *Resident Evil 6*, and it stars Claire Redfield, Chris Redfield's sister, and Barry Burton's daughter, Moira.

Indeed, it's interesting to tease out some of the similarities and differences between episodic games and TV. On the one hand, it's clear that episodic games have very much been heavily influenced by television. "We're excited about leaving players on a cliffhanger each week," says Okabe, referring to *Resident Evil: Revelations 2*'s TV-like release schedule. "The survival horror element of the game fits perfectly with cliffhangers between episodes that leave the player wanting to know what's going to happen and eagerly anticipating the next release."

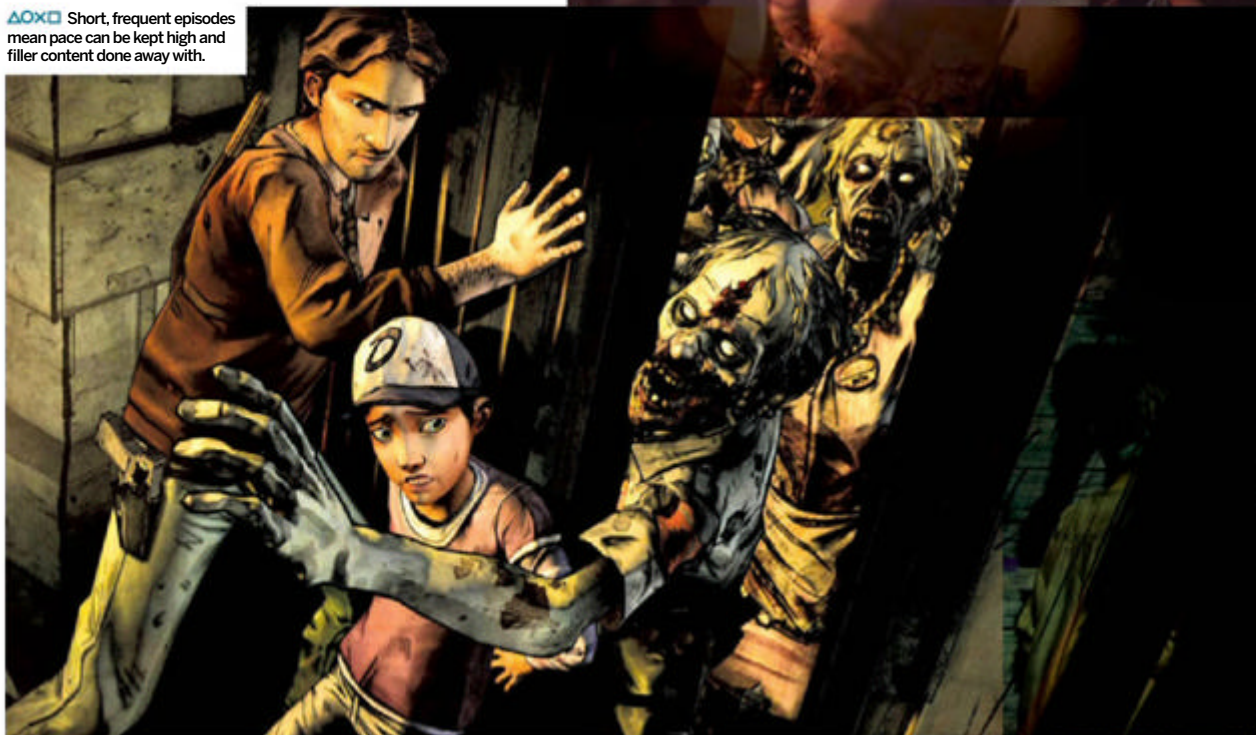
Of course, just as with TV, it's not a given that splitting a story into parts will hook the audience. The episodic structure presents videogame

storytellers with a challenge that's quite different to the way that videogame narratives normally function.

"One of the challenges is making each episode stand on its own feet, while still being part of a bigger story," Tørnquist explains. "By its very nature, *Dreamfall*'s plot is less inherently episodic than, say, *The Walking Dead*, and some players and critics may have felt that we were off to a slower than expected start – but this is something that will change with Book Two [it's worth bearing in mind that Book One and Two of *Dreamfall Chapters* will be released simultaneously on PS4], as the drama escalates, and I do believe the slow start helps build tension and expectations," he continues.

FEATURE | THE RISE OF THE CLIFFHANGER

ΔOX Short, frequent episodes mean pace can be kept high and filler content done away with.



Aside from the structural similarities it shares with serialised TV, there's another way in which episodic gaming emulates the way we experience the likes of serialised TV hits such as *Breaking Bad* and *Game Of Thrones* and, oddly, it's completely external to the act of playing those games. "We want the players to participate in the conversation and share their ideas and thoughts on each episode in anticipation of the next, similar to how a TV series would work," Okabe tells us. "People can play the game, then hop online and read other people's opinions, post their own comments and generally deepen their understanding of the game and enhance their experience. It's almost like a shared multiplayer story experience in that sense."

Indeed, a large part of the success of the episodic game formula lies in the way that they foster the kinds of discussions that Okabe talks about. Being forced to wait for the next instalment in a story gives us a decent amount of time to reflect on what we have experienced in the episode and naturally leads us to start concocting theories on what could come next. That process of absorbing what you've seen and then sharing your experiences and theories with others



ΔOX When services like PS Now are common, episodic games could be streamed rather than played from your hard drive.

while waiting for the next episode is part of the fun of episodic gaming.

Despite that similarity between gaming and TV, though, there is a fundamental difference to the kinds of discussions that happen around games. That is, of course, because games give the player agency and, therefore, the experience that you have will likely be different to that of other players, particularly in games like *Life Is Strange* and *Dreamfall Chapters* where the choices that you make will change the course of the story.

"The first battle for the game to win is for it to feel unique as you play it in your home," Moris explains. "There needs to be that sense of 'I am playing the game this way but I'm sure other people

aren't'. Then when the conversation is taken to a group of people in real life or online, a community is formed and this is obviously something extremely strong and that we are aiming for with *Life Is Strange*," he continues. "This is where the mythology of your game is created and developed, as more and more players share their experience and enrich each other's perception of it."

Moris and Tørnquist explain that they are keen to tap into those discussions that fans are having online and try to tweak what they are doing based on that feedback from fans, where possible. "We read a lot of the discussions that are happening on the various forums," Tørnquist reveals, "and we may even make minor changes based on these discussions, in order to confirm – or contradict! – our players' theory-crafting. It's a big part of what makes the episodic format so much fun to work with. There's an opportunity to actually take the input and do something with it."

We do wonder, however, whether or not the temptation to make changes to your game in order to please fans can have a negative effect, damaging the creator's original vision.

NEXT TIME ON...

We've seen TV series, comic books and even game series adapted into episodic games. These are our fantasy picks for future adaptations.

TRUE DETECTIVE

THE PROCEDURAL DETECTIVE

story has always worked well in the videogame medium, which makes us eager for a *True Detective* adaptation. Given that the second series of the show will feature entirely new characters in a new location, there's scope for a videogame that does the same but keeps the tone and style of the series that we have grown to love.

DEUS EX

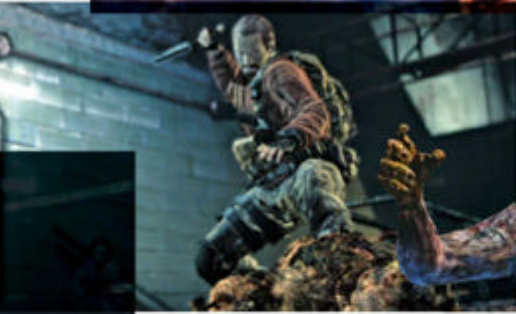
WE THINK THE *Deus Ex* universe, filled as it is with conspiracies and double crosses, could work really well as a story-driven episodic game. We'd like to see a game where you play as multiple characters aligned with competing factions. As to whether it takes place in the timeline of the original game, or during the *Human Revolution* era: we're easy.

PREACHER

FOLLOWING IN THE footsteps of the brilliant adaptation of *The Wolf Among Us*, we would like to see an adaptation of the critically acclaimed comic book series, *Preacher*. Mixing religious iconography with a Western influence, dark humour, odious characters, and, not to mention, plenty of violence, we think that it has got scope to be made into a great episodic series.

TWIN PEAKS

WITH CULT NINETIES series, *Twin Peaks*, set to return in 2016, why not also release a *Twin Peaks* episodic game? The surreal nature of the series would ideally give the developers a bit of freedom to do some strange and interesting things with a videogame adaptation. The 25 year gap in the story would be an ideal place to play around with the source material.



AOXO *Revelations 2* proves that it's not only story-driven adventure games that can make use of the episodic model.



"That danger is definitely there," Tørnquist concedes. "It's something we have to watch out for. It's easy to start second-guessing our choices when players are critical about something, so it's really important to stay true to our vision. After all, players are only seeing part of the bigger picture at this point."

The idea that players can have a degree of influence on how a story progresses, both within a game through choices they make and externally through feedback they give to the developer, is brilliant. However, we don't solely attribute the success of episodic gaming down to the fact that those games tend to give more power to players in terms of how a story progresses. Is not part of what makes episodic games so successful the fact that their structure gives developers the power to do things that they wouldn't be able to and that they can give us more interesting games as a result?

Indeed, as Moris notes, "there will always be more freedom in terms of the themes you can explore in smaller scale games" and in that sense, one of the great things about episodic games is that they provide a means for a game like

"ONE OF THE CHALLENGES IS MAKING EACH EPISODE STAND ON ITS FEET, WHILE STILL BEING A PART OF A BIGGER STORY"

Life Is Strange – a story driven adventure game with an indie movie feel – to exist.

The same goes for *Dreamfall Chapters*. Using an episodic structure has provided both a practical and creative means to make the game. "*Dreamfall Chapters* is a pretty massive and ambitious undertaking," says Tørnquist. "As a very, very small team making a very, very big game, we realised there was no way we would be able to bug fix, polish and publish the whole thing in one go," he says. "It just wasn't realistic."

"As a storyteller, it is incredibly liberating to work with an episodic game," Tørnquist continues. "We get to focus on smaller parts of a bigger story, and we get to spend our time tweaking and polishing rather than rushing to get everything

finished in one go. I also enjoy the world- and character building that you can do with an episodic story."

We, for one are glad that the growth of episodic gaming means that we've got games like *Life Is Strange* and *Dreamfall Chapters* on PS4. It's also interesting to see the episodic format beginning to be explored in genres other than narrative adventure games, such as in survival horror title *Resident Evil: Revelations 2*.

Who knows if other developers will pick up the episodic model and experiment with applying it to other genres, or what kind of innovations we might see in episodic gaming in the future. Certainly, though, we should expect the success of episodic gaming to influence the kinds of games we'll be playing in the future, whether they themselves are episodic in structure or not. Indeed, we're seeing that already as the idea of game experiences being shaped by player choice finds itself in vogue. Perhaps that means that Moris is correct in predicting that, in the future, we could see "meta-choices that will matter across all games within a franchise." Fittingly, given our subject matter, we'll have to wait to find out exactly what the future will bring.



PS4 EVOLUTION

How your favourite games are better on PS4

ARCADE

Thought retro games were a thing of the past? Think again. With the spiraling costs of triple-A games, indie arcade games are more prevalent than ever. Luke Albigés investigates how many of these games are far deeper than their simple looks let on...



Like Betamax, Minidiscs and vinyl, arcades are a way of enjoying media that many younger players today will likely never properly experience. Buzzing neon-drenched rooms full of cabinets all trying to shout louder than those around them to get you to play them, arcades were a fundamental part of our gaming development of a lot of us older players. Back in the day, these booming cabinets offered experiences that simply couldn't be replicated on home computers or early consoles, meaning that seeking out a local arcade with a pocket full of change was the only way to enjoy the very best that gaming currently had to offer.

“METAL SLUG AND ALIEN HOMINID MANAGED TO BUMP THE SPOTLIGHT BACK ONTO GAMING'S PAST A LITTLE”



AOXI Mr Driller is pretty much the best thing ever. Anyone who says otherwise clearly hates fun.

As technology exponentially improved and costs fell, it didn't take long for home machines to catch up to their arcade counterparts. As early as the SNES version of *Street Fighter II* in 1992, we were starting to see home versions of games that gave arcades a run for their money and by the time PlayStation came along in 1995, the term 'arcade-perfect' was everywhere – games like *Ridge Racer* and *Tekken* looked as good and played as well as the cabinet versions, giving players the option to drop a few quid for a couple of minutes of fun or splash out on their own versions to keep forever. As more and more games rivalled and even trumped their arcade counterparts, the arcade scene began to fall into decline, not helped by the shift to 3D and demand for polygon-based games that made many older coin-op cabinets unattractive to a new generation – many arcade operators simply

5 THINGS EVERY ARCADE GAME NEEDS



SIMPLICITY

While it might be seen as a negative in big budget games, arcade games need only a few simple rules to keep players coming back – purity is key to the score-chasing mentality.



VARIETY

There's all sorts of tricks developers can use to keep things interesting. Look at *Geometry Wars* – it's a simple shooter but its longevity comes from a number of unique game modes.



LEADERBOARDS

Modern arcade games are all about the competition and if players can't compete against friends, rivals and experts from around the world, they're unlikely to stick around for long.



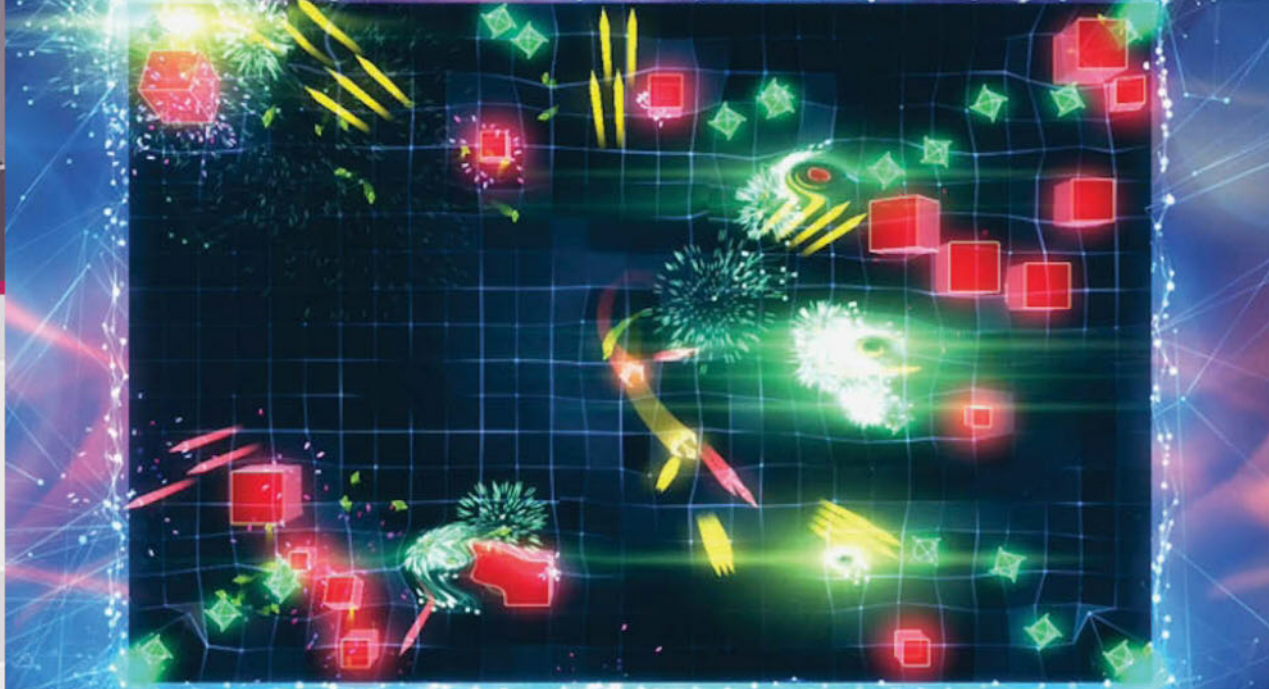
NUANCE

We have established that a simple tool set is best when it comes to arcade games, but the little subtleties to mechanics and scoring systems are what make the very best stand out.



STRUCTURE

The action needs to be contained to short, sharp bursts in order to offer players the true arcade experience and keep them replaying in search of bigger numbers to top the leaderboards.



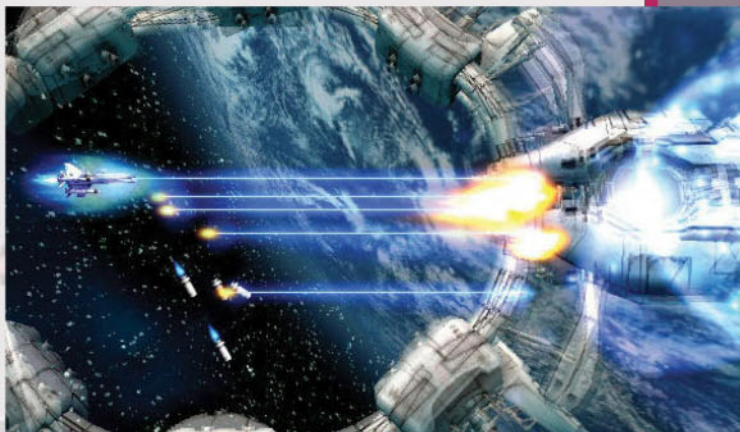
couldn't afford to upgrade all the classic games to the latest releases. With technology improving so quickly, even those that could would quickly fall behind the curve as bigger, better and more exciting games just kept on coming.

But while physical arcades – in the West, at least – ended up looking to gimmicky games and full-on experiences to remain relevant, the classic quick-fix gameplay synonymous with arcade games started to take up residence in home consoles instead. For a good while, it was primarily fighters and racing games that led the march, with a trickle of classic 2D shooters and puzzle games kept alive by the hardcore. The relative failure of *Street Fighter III* in 1999 was the death knell for old-school arcade fighters, and pretty much every other classic game archetype fell with it as the world went in search of fleshed-out characters, open worlds and jaw-dropping 3D visuals.

This continued through the PS2 generation, but the cracks in the new wave of gaming were already beginning to show. Games like *Metal Slug* and *Alien Hominid* managed to bump the spotlight back onto gaming's past a little, with a handful of 2D fighters, shooters and racing games all doing their bit to keep a classic era alive. It was becoming increasingly clear that there was room for both styles of game in the market – those that prioritise bombast and spectacle as well as those developed to offer quick-fix fun. But while players clearly wanted to enjoy both types of game, low sales of many seemingly old-fashioned releases made another thing apparent, too – players didn't want to pay as much for old-school games as those that were pushing the envelope. With the high overheads of physical media, there was only so much wiggle room on price in those early days, but the digital revolution would change all of that.

While the PS2 was the first console of its generation to hit stores, the latecomers had a little more time to implement several more forward-thinking features – Xbox released with an internal hard drive for game saves and

△○×□ We do miss sitting down in an oversized cabinet to enjoy a spot of arcade racing action...



downloaded content, while GameCube... well, it had a handle, we suppose. Sony went on to release add-ons for the PS2 that would allow the same connectivity but they never really took off to the degree the manufacturer would perhaps have liked, leaving Xbox in the driving seat when it came to downloadable game releases. With Xbox Live Arcade, a new type of platform was born, one where smaller, retro-style games could be made available at minimal cost to both developers/publishers and consumers. Relatively slow uptake of broadband internet meant that this still wasn't a massive market but by the time PS3 and Xbox 360 came around, the digital infrastructure of most developed countries had caught up to gaming

FEATURE PS4 EVOLUTION: ARCADE



△××△ Puzzle games are almost exclusively digital-only releases these days. They're cheaper now, too...

GAME CHANGER

GEOMETRY WARS RETRO EVOLVED



When Bizarre Creations made Xbox racer *Project Gotham Racing 2*, we doubt the team had any idea that the simple mini-game playable via a cabinet in the in-game garage would go on to be the best part of the package. The invasion of 3D games the generation before had all but eliminated classic arcade-style games, with developers embroiled in a battle to see who could impress most with thousands of polygons and full 3D worlds – if a game looked or played like one from the Eighties or early Nineties, nobody wanted to know. So what seemed like a daft, throwaway inclusion actually went some way to bringing back an entire scene, with *Geometry Wars* paving the way for the original Xbox Live Arcade scene, where numerous similar games would be given a chance to shine. PSN naturally followed suit on PS3 and today, the downloadable market is filled with games inspired by and iterating on the all-time classics, making it a great place to find your very own score attack heaven, be it *Trials Fusion*, *Rock Band Blitz* or even surprising sequel *Geometry Wars 3*, rising from the ashes of Bizarre like a wonderful angular phoenix.

innovation to the point where the rise of digital releases would be something that came to define the entire generation.

As development costs continued to climb for teams looking to take full advantage of the new hardware, smaller digital releases offered a platform for smaller creative studios to get their games to market. Naturally, simple games tend to be cheaper to produce than more complex ones, leading to a renaissance for gameplay styles and genres that had been presumed dead for years. Classic 2D platformers came back into fashion, in no small part due to how cleverly the teams behind the best ones managed to fuse

classic arcade scene was reborn on PS3 in some way, shape or form, with even more interesting ideas coming out of developers updating these classic templates for a modern audience.

While it might not seem like there's a lot of room for growth in this sector in the leap from PS3 to PS4 – we've not seen so great a leap in terms of hardware power or online integration as we did from PS2 to PS3, after all – the truth is that classic arcade-style games are set to be bigger than ever. You only need to look at the number of big releases that were delayed during PS4's first year to see that creating a full-featured triple-A title is something that costs millions of pounds

“WE’VE COME A LONG WAY FROM THE HALLS OF GLOWING COIN-MUNCHERS TO THE GAMING LANDSCAPE TODAY”

old-school gameplay with modern sensibilities – *Braid* offered narrative ingenuity and cunning time-based puzzles, for instance, while games like *N+* and *Super Meat Boy* brought back quick-fire, skill-heavy platforming but without the need to keep forking out pennies every time you died. Puzzle games, arcade racers, basic fighting games... pretty much every mainstay of the

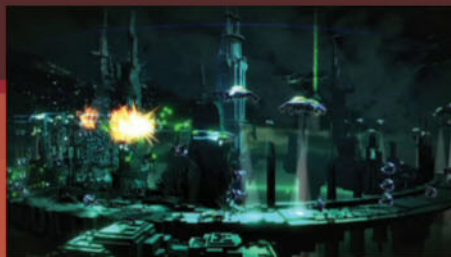
and takes millions of hours, meaning that a lot of smaller studios are instead looking to the past for inspiration. 2D pixel visuals are far less labour intensive than attempted photo-realism, leading to the revival of this retro aesthetic, although even the bigger studios are getting in on the classic gaming action – *Trials* might look the part but its simple gameplay and time attack roots mean that it could

PS3 INSPIRATION



THAT'S A PLUS

Not everyone is convinced that retro-style games have a place in the 21st Century, but a bash on one of the best arcade games is enough to change their minds. PS Plus has been great for introducing subscribers to awesome indies that they wouldn't otherwise have played.



DIGITAL-ONLY

Gone are the days when a simple match-three puzzle game can command the same asking price as a full open-world adventure – arcade games need to be more affordable to be seen as good value. But never fear, as PSN is packed with retro-inspired releases at fair prices.

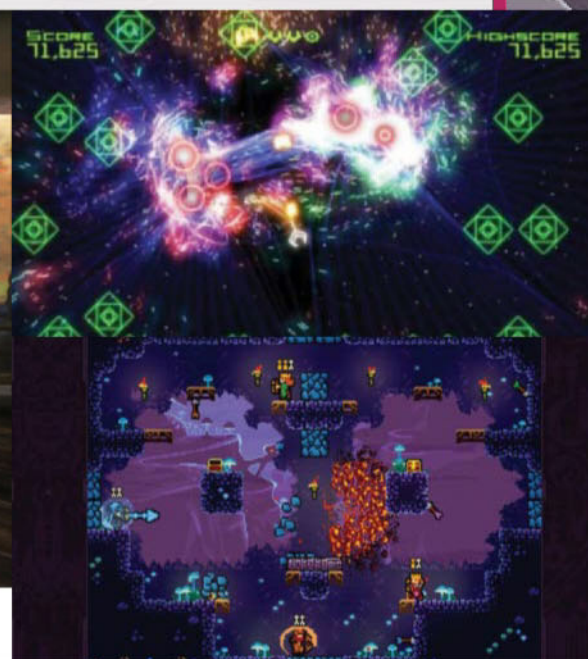


APPWARDLY MOBILE

Developers are looking to mobile markets for ways to keep old-school experiences relevant, including free-to-play games that limit daily consumption unless you spend money to extend the fun. It couldn't be closer to the arcade format of pouring credits into a machine.



ΔΟΧΔ It's near impossible to walk past a *Tekken Tag* cabinet and resist the urge to chuck some cash into it.



easily have leaped straight out of the Nineties and into the fancy new duds it sports today.

But offering familiar gameplay experiences with lush new visuals is fairly common, but the return of vintage genres and game styles has also afforded smaller teams the ability to delve even deeper into gaming's past for style inspiration. Good pixel art will always look better than bad 3D and you only have to look at the grim pixels of *The Binding Of Isaac* or the simple style of *Towerfall* to see how much impact old-fashioned visuals can still have today. Some developers are even reaching further back into the past, with games like *Nidhogg* and parts of *SportsFriends* looking like they leapt straight off the Atari 2600 or NES, even though their mechanics and controls are way tighter than anything either of those old consoles could actually do. Retro is still big business – aside from the right-gimmick-right-time success of the Wii, it's pretty much what keeps Nintendo afloat as fans continue to throw as much money at Mario, Link and Kirby as they ever did back in the day – and while there's still a

degree of the snobbery that kept classic games and visuals at bay for a few generations, players today seem to be a lot more accepting of retro-style games and even more so of simple visuals. *Minecraft* has certainly done its bit in showing the world that graphics aren't everything and now, that's filtering down to all walks of gaming. You don't need an open world or a 500-hour narrative-led quest to create a good game – all you need is a good idea, tight mechanics and solid controls and you could have the next classic on your hands.

We've come a long way from the halls of glowing coin-munchers to the gaming landscape of today, leading to the division of series and genres that used to stand side by side. Fighters still manage to command full price releases by offering shitloads of solo and online content that arcade cabinets never did or could, while racers can still also demand a full retail release if they've got the content to back up the price tag. Simpler games seem consigned to digital releases in the modern age, but that's no insult – with all major games also getting digital releases, the

online store allows *Switch Galaxy Ultra* to rub shoulders with *GTA V* and *Resogun* to enjoy the same exposure as *FIFA*. If anything, we've come full circle and as digital becomes more appealing to many players, the digital marketplace will continue to offer both the very best in high-end gaming entertainment and the cream of classic gameplay experiences. It's up to us as players to pick which we want, when we want, just as we did when we wandered the rows of cabinets back in the day, and our options are more varied and incredible than ever before. While we lament the death of arcades, the sad truth is that we simply don't need them any more. Online leaderboards open score attack games to an even wider player base, local multiplayer classics like fighters and sports games continue to offer competitive couch gaming at its finest and short of the top-end gimmick cabinets, there are few experiences you could have in an arcade that can't now take place in a front room instead. Arcades themselves might be dead, then, but arcade culture and style will never die. Of that, you can be sure.



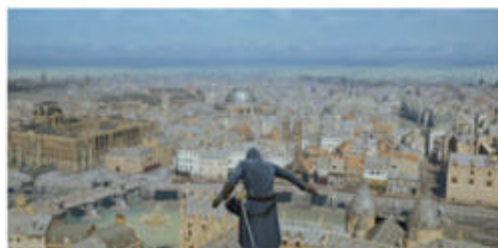
TOP TEN MIND-BLOWING VISTAS

THERE ARE A WHOLE RAFT OF WAYS IN WHICH VIDEOGAMES CAN AMAZE US, BUT PERHAPS THE MOST INSTANT WAY IN WHICH THEY CAN TAKE OUR BREATH AWAY IS THROUGH INCREDIBLE VISUALS. SO WITH THAT IN MIND, WE PICK OUT THE MEDIUM'S GREATEST MIND-BLOWING LANDSCAPES



METAL GEAR SOLID 4

GRANTED, WHEN YOU return to the setting of the first *MGS* game, Shadow Moses, the view that you're confronted with isn't that spectacular in and of itself. For anyone who played the original back in the day though, that first time you see the now bare opening area of *MGS*, nostalgia lends it a haunting and melancholic kind of beauty. A relatively plain vista, then, but the return to Shadow Moses certainly fits the category of mind-blowing for fans.



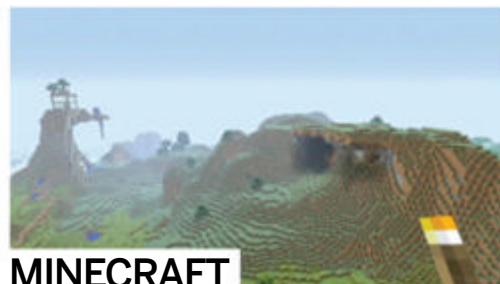
ASSASSIN'S CREED UNITY

THERE'S PLENTY WRONG with *Assassin's Creed Unity*, but its incredible recreation of revolutionary Paris is one of the game's strengths. We can't really pick out one example, but stand atop any of the viewpoints scattered throughout *Unity* and you'll be treated to phenomenal views, supported by technology that allows for an incredible draw distance, and crowds filling the streets below you. If only the rest of the game was that impressive...



FAR CRY 4

SET IN KYRAT (though it is clearly meant to be Nepal), *Far Cry 4*'s lush forests are always framed with spectacular mountains in the background. This game spoils you, because from pretty much anywhere, *Far Cry 4*'s landscapes just look incredible. The density of its wildlife adds to that, too – just think of a wild elephant roaming in front of a lake with mountain ranges in the background and you will kind of get the picture.



MINECRAFT

YOU'RE AT THE mercy of the procedural generation gods when it comes to *Minecraft*, but the game can produce some wonderful surprises upon creation of a new world. Part of the appeal of *Minecraft*, of course, is that you can craft your own landscapes. You only need to look at a few pictures of what people have created in *Minecraft* – *Game Of Thrones*' Kings Landing springs to mind – to see how impressive the landscapes can be.



THE ELDER SCROLLS IV: OBLIVION

THE WORLD OF *Oblivion* might not look that impressive to modern eyes, but back when it released, its scale was striking. That's especially true after the game's opening section, which takes place in the sewers. After battling through those sewers, you emerge out from the darkness and find the landscape of *Oblivion*'s world ahead of you, its open nature all the more impressive after emerging from the dark.



JOURNEY

A DESERT ISN'T necessarily a setting that you would instantly think of when you imagine some of the most impressive and awe-inspiring views in videogames, but that's just what *Journey* provides us with. *Journey* is beautiful throughout, but the moment that sticks in our mind is when you're sliding down a steep hill and the light from a setting sun peaks through the ruins ahead of you to make the desert shine like gold. Wonderful.



UNCHARTED 2: AMONG THIEVES

WE COULD HAVE just as easily picked *Uncharted 3* for this position, but we have plumped for the game that really saw the *Uncharted* series explode, not least because of the impressive vistas that were on show in this game. This is another game that looks beautiful from beginning to end, with loads of spectacular scenes to choose from. We could lump for one, but we're not going to, because there are so many throughout *Uncharted 2*'s globetrotting adventure, from the section in Nepal (though it might be hard to remember how nice it looked with a chopper shooting at you the whole time), to the final reveal of Shambhala.



THE ELDER SCROLLS V: SKYRIM

THERE'S A REASON that there are two *Elder Scrolls* games in this list and that is that because Bethesda are very good at building beautiful open worlds. Roaming *Skyrim*'s wild lands, you'll find plenty of spectacular views yourself, though we will highlight a few for you. There's Markath, the Mage's College from afar, the Throat Of The World for spectacular views, the secret garden-like Moss Mother Cavern, or the city of Solitude, to name but a few. All of these can be enhanced if you're fortunate enough to encounter them while a spectacular display of *Skyrim*'s version of the Northern Lights illuminates your way.



RED DEAD REDEMPTION

ROCKSTAR'S BRILLIANT PORTRAYAL of the Old West in its latter days really captures the spirit of the era as we all imagine it in our minds, seeing it as we do through the prism of the western genre. As you roam the plains, you're consistently struck by how stunning *Red Dead Redemption*'s world looks, despite the fact that it is stark and savage. Indeed, this game is an ideal example of the fact that a relatively empty world, one that is lacking in colour, that is silent and still, can still be beautiful in its own way. Then there is that scene where you ride into Mexico to the tune of *Far Away* by José Gonzalez, which really ramps up the atmosphere.



GRAND THEFT AUTO V

THE KINGS OF world-building strike once again, though the place that tops our list is quite different to the one that won Rockstar second spot on our list of mind-blowing vistas. Where *Red Dead Redemption* is muted and quiet, *GTA V*'s Los Santos is loud, brash, colourful and full of detail. When it comes to selecting its most spectacular vista, we were tempted to pick something from the country region outside of Los Santos, such as Mount Chiliad, but *GTA* is a series that's always

been about the city. For that reason, we've picked a Vista that encapsulates that fact: the view of Los Santos from the Vinewood sign. From here, you get yourself a truly incredible view of Los Santos. More than that, though, the Hollywood sign is emblematic of the celebrity-obsessed, superficial nature of the worst of American culture. What could be more appropriate than looking at a city that's built to deconstruct that culture from atop *GTA*'s own version of that iconic sign?



DEATH OF XTREME

There was a time that extreme sports games could do no wrong. That golden era has well and truly vanished, though, it leads us to ask the question: where have all the grinds, kick-flips and 1080s gone?

NOTHING LASTS FOREVER, even the most stubborn Manchester United fan will attest to that. It doesn't matter how popular or powerful something seems today – by tomorrow, the bubble could have burst and a once captivated audience will have moved on something newer, fresher and more popular.

Within the videogame sphere, this reality is painfully demonstrated by the rise and fall of the 'extreme' genre, a sub-division of sports games that at one time had almost every major publisher jostling for position to cash-in on its popularity. The years spanning 1999 to 2010 saw the release of no less than 16 *Tony Hawk's* games, five *SSX* titles, three *Skates*, three *Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX* games and a whole host of others covering everything from jet-skiing to wakeboarding.

You couldn't enter a game store over the early years of the new millennium without wading through a sea of

"THE 'SPORT' ELEMENT WAS FORGOTTEN IN FAVOUR OF THE 'EXTREME' ASPECT"

extreme sports games; they covered shelves, advertising boards and even the uniforms of employees. This was a time when almost everyone that owned a PlayStation 2 knew the difference between an inverted varial kickflip and a nollie backside heelflip.

Enter your local game retailer today, whether online or high street, and you're hard pressed to see signs that such a frenzy for this kind of action ever existed. The stands occupied by *Tony Hawk* and *SSX* are filled with *Call Of Duty* and *FIFA*. It seems audiences are tired of grinds and kickflips. The reasons for the decline are, as with any cultural change, debatable, but there are certain pillars of truth that can help us understand why the genre fell out of fashion to such a degree for those franchises that helped define it. Innovation, or more specifically a lack thereof, is one of those truths.

Extreme sports thrive on innovation. The very term *extreme* lends itself to

TRICKED OUT

How likely is it that extreme sports gaming's most famous faces can recapture their glory days? Let's find out...



TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER

A new *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater* was confirmed in November, but details of content and release platforms have yet to be made public. The strength of the brand name means a respectable level of sales is almost guaranteed, but it will take a lot of effort to convince players that have grown tired of the series to get invested again.

However, if the new game can provide a level of quality that surpasses its expectations then – thanks to a lack of competition – the time might be right for a relaunch to garner some success.



SSX

Of all the major franchises of the extreme sports 'era' of videogames, it's *SSX* that it perhaps likely to make an impact on PlayStation 4. *SSX* thrived on taking you away from reality and providing a vision of the sport that often felt more like *WipeOut* than sliding down a piste.

It's that sense of speed in an environment markedly different from modern racing games that has the potential to appeal to audiences in 2015 and beyond, the snowboard making a change from the usual provision of two- or four-wheeled vehicles.



DAVE MIRRA'S FREESTYLE BMX

Let's face it, the world of BMX has never been as popular as that of skateboarding or snowboarding. Thus, it's unsurprising that Dave Mirra only spawned three games based on the sport that he is the famous face of.

That's not to say that the *Freestyle BMX* titles were of inferior quality. On the contrary, their skilled construction made them at least equal to the more famous *Tony Hawk's* series in many people's eyes and more than a few remain disappointed that not more were released. Still, BMX's lack of popularity means this is a series unlikely to return.



△○×△ Oversaturated as the market may have become, we do miss busting out a kickflip or two.

visions of experimentation, the pushing of boundaries and going above and beyond what anyone has seen or done in the past. In the real world of extreme sports – personified by the brash juggernaut that is the X Games – this kind of consistent originality and creativity continues in full force. Almost every year skateboarding, motocross and BMX sees the birth of either a new hero or a new trick; the danger and daring stakes raised a notch or more higher than they had previously gone before.

Confined to the universal laws of physics, participants in these events can only achieve what gravity, patience and practise allows. That, however, is not true of videogames. In the digital realm, almost anything you can dream up is able to be transplanted onto a disc or into a downloadable package. This allows designers to immediately go further than reality could ever possibly allow, the likes of *SSX* and *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater*



△○×△ Nailing a perfect trick line remains as satisfying as ever.

featuring stunts that (barring some form of genetic modification program) no human could ever hope to pull off.

While the imagination applied to some of these digital tricks is admirable, it creates a problem in regards to where a series can go next. It's all well and good to include actions that are wacky to the point of parody for the sake of entertainment, but the further you go in that direction, the more distant and disconnected you become from the sport that you're supposedly emulating. Across the entire life cycle of extreme sports game sub-genre, the 'sport' element was forgotten in favour of the 'extreme' aspect of it all.

As a result, the aforementioned series' (among others) became tired, predictable and clichéd. Without even playing them, it became immediately obvious that the next skating or snowboarding game would be even more overblown than the one that proceeded it. Publishers and developers pushing all of their efforts and resources towards ridiculousness, abandoning the innate and often delicate complexity associated with the sport in question.

Intelligently spotting a gap in the market, EA's *Skate* series launched in 2007 and positioned itself as almost the polar opposite to Activision's *Tony Hawk's* games. Where *Tony Hawk's* was all about big air and outlandish tricks, *Skate* was fundamentally more grounded in a street skating experience

GAMING FADS

Extreme sports games are not the only fad to have passed away...



TAMAGOTCHI

If you're of a certain age, you will almost definitely have owned a Tamagotchi. For the one of you that didn't, you missed out on a world of cleaning out poop and being constantly harassed by a needy digital 'pet' that was more addictive than Oreos.



SCRATCH AND SNIFF

Unless you were there this might be difficult to believe, but videogame discs used to feature scratch and sniff 'technology'. Scratch your disc and smell something based on what you were about to play. *Gran Turismo 2* discs smelled like burnt rubber, while *FIFA 2001* gave you a waft of turf.



ONLINE PASSES

The world is much better place in the absence of the kinds of 'online passes' made infamous by the likes of EA. As a means to deliver more cash to their pockets, publishers would force those that purchased a second hand copy of a game to pay for an extortionately priced pass to play online.



3D GAMING

Some might argue that 3D is still a 'thing' in videogames, but they would be wrong. Playing the likes of *Gran Turismo 5* in 3D was fun for about 15 minutes, until you realised it added nothing. Besides, it's about to be blown out of the water by VR kits such as Project Morpheus... the next fad?



AOXO You know what was a bad idea? A peripheral that cost more than an actual skateboard.

with the open city encouraging you to look for interesting, imaginative, smooth lines to pop modest tricks across.

Skate's two sequels, while well-executed, performed the same mistake as other extreme sport games by failing to innovate. As much fun as it was to play as a skateboarder acting in a way much closer to what you might be able to achieve on your local streets or skate park, doing so for three successive games saw its once grateful audience lose their interest. Much like overt craziness, something approaching dedicated authenticity only holds the mainstream interest for so long before fading away.

Saturation tends to kill off even the best ideas, over-familiarity breeding boredom and even resentment towards a franchise that players once held as a novel and entertaining enterprise. However, if history has taught us that no fad lives forever, it has also taught us that death doesn't have to be eternal.

Plenty of fads have fallen by the wayside only to come back bigger and

stronger than ever. Leather jackets are trendier than they've been since the Eighties after falling distinctly out of fashion in the Nineties, while a brief walk through a city's trendier districts will highlight just how resurgent leopard print has become. And let's not forget the resurgence of thick-rimmed glasses...

The adventure game has made a remarkable comeback in recent years thanks to the fresh angles epitomised by the works of Telltale Games and Double Fine Productions. Sports games are slightly different from the likes of *Broken Age* and *The Walking Dead*, though. For any game attempting to link itself to reality, there must be a genuine hunger for the activity being represented. Ideally, there needs to be a palpable culture surrounding it. The likes of football, basketball and American football have achieved and retained this cultural relevance; entire tribes exist which are concentrated on supporting either a particular team or the wider sport itself. It comes as no surprise, then, that these constructs have spawned



a legion of annually released and consistently successful games.

Extreme sports once had a taste of this kind of cultural relevance, but they don't any longer. The height of the videogame genre coincided with the excitement surrounding the dramatic increase in popularity that encircled the X-Games, that, in turn, helped enormously by the charisma and showmanship of Tony Hawk himself. That time has passed and, no matter how skilled the likes of Travis Pastrana or Nyjah Huston might be, their relevance and impact on popular culture is minimal in comparison to the extreme sport personalities that became stars some 15 years ago.

Part of the reason for that, it could be argued, is that 'extreme sports' are no

"SKATE'S TWO SEQUELS, WHILE WELL-EXECUTED, PERFORMED THE SAME MISTAKE AS OTHER EXTREME GAMES BY FAILING TO INNOVATE"



longer considered to be extreme.

There was a time when skateboarders were *skateboarders*, the very act of skating a symbol of allegiance to a certain ideology and even way of life. That is not so much the case anymore.

Perhaps because of extreme sports' popularity a decade ago, the likes of skateboarding and snowboarding are distinctly mainstream propositions. Nowadays you're just as likely to skate *and* play football or basketball, which wasn't the case previously. The sub-culture of skating has all but been abolished, instead it is now very much part of the mainstream. Nike sponsors skateboarders and that in itself is perhaps the ultimate sign of an activity being a definitive part of mainstream culture.

Without that strong sub-cultural backbone to support it, it's incredibly difficult to see the extreme sports genre reclaiming its prior popularity and appeal. It would be wrong to suggest that the genre has died out completely, though.

While far more abstract than the games mentioned above, Roll7's *OlliOlli* and Ubisoft's *Trials* series embody how an extreme sports foundation can work within the modern gaming landscape. By abandoning completely any link to the real world, both of these games

have managed to carve out a niche of dedicated fans attracted to the tough-as-nails offerings which they serve – something which fits snugly alongside the difficulty in learning the sports they roughly represent.

It's within this realm that extreme sports have a potentially lucrative, creative and engaging future. Developers are now freed from the downfalls of the past and from trying to create a meaningful hook to a culture that just doesn't exist in the way it once did in today's culture. Extreme sports have moved to a new place in society and, in order to be great again, potential future extreme sport games need to embrace this change and adapt to it accordingly.

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ΔOXD I-No is so quick that she's hard to use effectively, but **CVS2** Morrigan players should feel right at home with her.



Guilty Gear Xrd-SIGN-

Heaven or hell? Let's rock!



ALSO ON PS3

HE MAY NOT be anywhere near as well known as the likes of Hideo Kojima, Shinji Mikami or Hideki Kamiya,

but that doesn't change the fact that Daisuke Ishiwatari is an absolute legend in Japanese game development. At a time when it looked as though 2D fighters were on the way out, he came out with *Guilty Gear* – a complex and difficult fighter in a market where everyone else was trying to pander to everyone to keep the fighting genre afloat but were instead drowning it by doing so. Ishiwatari had a hand in pretty much every aspect of the PlayStation fighter, from character design and system development to rocking soundtrack and even voice acting. It's clear from the timing that he didn't do it to try and hit the big time – he did it for the love. *Guilty Gear* is a game born out of one man's passion for rock music,

DETAILS

PUBLISHER
Arc System Works

DEVELOPER
In-house

PSN PRICE
\$59.99

PLAYERS
1-2

AGE RATING
12+

TWITTER
@ArcSystemWorksU

Trophies 48



1 3 8 36

and that love is just as present as ever in *Xrd*. In fact, it's fair to say that it's one of the defining features of the game, which, with so much quality on display, is quite the statement.

We've never wished that printed screenshots could move quite so much as we do while writing these words, as seeing *Xrd* in motion is the only way to truly appreciate its impeccable artistic and technical achievements. Fully rendered 3D characters are cleverly designed and textured to give the illusion of hand-drawn 2D, and it's so well done that you'll frequently lapse while playing and just assume you *are* playing a 2D fighter. And that's when the game strikes, sending the camera on swooping jaunts around characters in celebration of impressive finishes or deadly super attacks – a common technique in 3D games but one that here manages to impress every time it occurs. It's effectively a playable anime, only one happy to let the majority of the action breathe with a fixed side-on view and save the jaw-dropping panning shots for when they'll have the most impact. It's stunning, frankly, and in terms of pure, raw style, there's nothing on PS4 that even comes close right now.

For such a technical game, it really doesn't put up too much of an unnecessary barrier to entry, either. The tutorial is as comprehensive as Arc's tend to be, walking you through everything from the most basic techniques to high-end cancels and genre staples, then offering the usual suite of character-specific combo trials



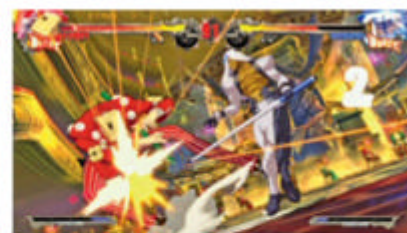


to continue your education and teach you what each of the fighters is capable of. As long as you have the genre fundamentals down and don't struggle too much with special move inputs, you'll quickly be able to string together relatively impressive combos and with more time in the lab, you just might turn those into lengthier chains with which to punish your foes. The system itself isn't nearly as complex as *BlazBlue's*

"IN TERMS OF PURE, RAW STYLE, THERE'S NOTHING ON PS4 THAT EVEN COMES CLOSE RIGHT NOW"

character-specific Drive attacks and with so many universal features, the basics you learn with one character are generally transferable to another without too much fuss. Sure, play styles differ between them, but such nuances are something you'll learn by spending longer with your preferred oddball.

While there are quite a few omissions in terms of legacy characters, Arc fighters always start out this way – you get a solid if somewhat modest roster to begin with and more fighters join as the inevitable updates roll out. However you like to play, you're already covered.



There are rushdown characters, zoners, gimmicks and keepaway fighters ready to rock, so it's just a case of trying them out to see who you like. If you already have a favourite, you're likely to find them largely unchanged from when last you met, although each has a bunch of new tricks up their sleeves as well.

You can customise your chosen weirdo to even better suit your play style in the new MOM mode, a curious survival campaign where perks, projectiles and all kinds of other silliness can be earned and bolted onto a character's existing move pool to give you the edge in the series of increasingly tough predetermined challenges. Health carries over between battles but death only harms your streak bonus and not your progress – yet another example of how *Guilty Gear* manages to be at once dazzlingly hardcore and admirably approachable. You can even use your saved MOM characters in competitive play, but that's unlikely to see a lot of use, in all honesty. The purity of an even playing fiend and a good fight is always preferable when it's two human players throwing down, after all.

For that reason, it's the online suite that has been robbing us of most of our time, and it's as good as you might hope. You start by picking from a set of region-specific lobbies to help avoid latency issues, before taking up residence in your own virtual arcade. Eight players can huddle round the same cabinet and play 'winner stays on' while watching

(and commenting on, via in-game text chat that floats past the fight in progress) the current players, or you can all break off and go head-to-head with another player on one of the other machines. It's a beautifully versatile system whether you want to watch and learn from the experts, try to see off all challengers or just casually train against a similarly skilled rival.

Elsewhere, the suitably ludicrous Story mode is basically one long cutscene and has had fights stripped from it altogether, while Arcade features a typically cheap final boss. But you won't care. Between core systems and mechanics that are undeniably top tier, a cracking roster and a comprehensive suite of training and competitive options, *Xrd* has everything a great fighter needs. In fact, the only thing it's missing right now is a European release date, but importing has never been easier than in this digital age.

Get involved today and help us send a message – Ishiwatari, never, ever stop rocking. Oh, and give us an EU release.

Luke Albigés

VERDICT

***BlazBlue* has been a solid stopgap but having *Guilty Gear* back in the top tier of fighting games**

is a dream come true. Stunning, entertaining and essential for anyone who enjoys a scrap.

93%

FLIGHT

REMEMBER: IF YOU GO TOO SLOW WHILE FLYING, YOU'LL STALL

Saints Row: Gat Out Of Hell

When the night is over, you'll be gone, gone, gone



DETAILS

PUBLISHER

Deep Silver

DEVELOPER

Volition

PSN PRICE

£14.99

PLAYERS

1-2

AGE RATING

18

TWITTER

@SaintsRow

Trophies 46



ALSO ON PS4

RIGHT NOW, RUN-of-the-mill DLC just won't cut it anymore. Back in 2013, *Far Cry 3* tested the waters with *Far Cry 3:*

Blood Dragon – a game so ludicrously far from what *Far Cry* is, it felt like it should have never worked. But it did, and it set a precedent for what to expect from standalone DLC that deviates from their main game's foundations.

Unfortunately, *Gat Out Of Hell* doesn't quite manage to do that, but perhaps that's because *Saints Row IV* was already crazy, so there wasn't anywhere else the series could go to blow our minds. Hell isn't a bad choice, but it all just seems so under-developed compared to the parent game. At one point, as you drive into the uncannily grid-like streets of Hell, your mouthy companion Kinzie Kensington says "it feels a lot like Steelport". And you know what? She's right.

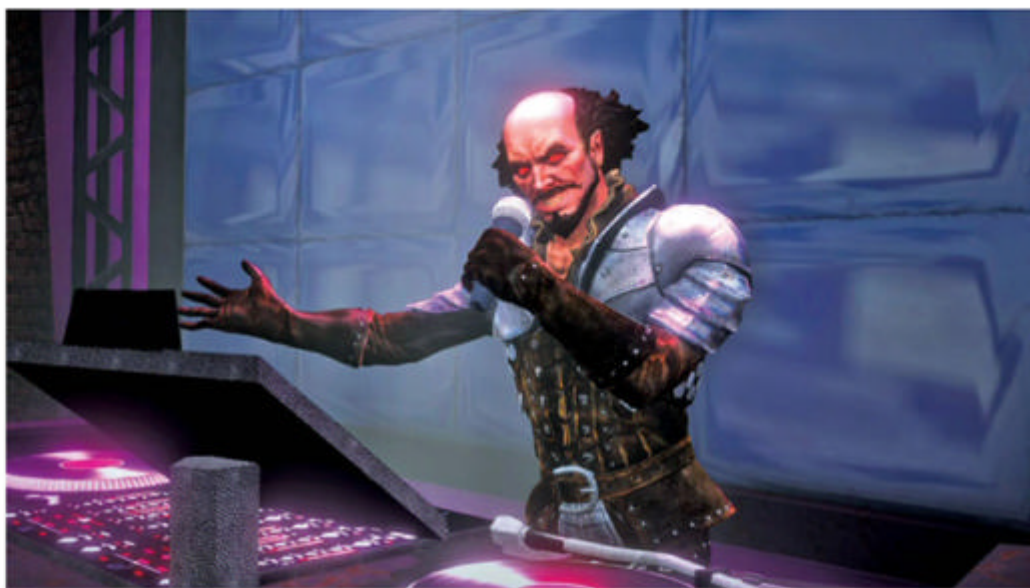
The game feels like a palette swap for the most part – a fiery reimagining

of the staple *Saints Row* city, but less interesting to look at because everything's the colour of brimstone. Volition has cut a lot of corners, too – there's jankiness in *Gat Out Of Hell* that you'd never find in the core games, and some clunky animations, or dialogue that won't load, too. Glitches – including pop-in and a *lot* of tearing – wait for you in every mission (maybe that's what Hell will actually look like, though?).

If you can get over some of the technical drawbacks, the gameplay experience is actually quite rewarding. *Gat Out Of Hell's* premise is that the titular Johnny Gat and his belligerent friend have been sucked into Satan's domain, chasing after The Boss (who got dragged in by a Ouija Board with a vendetta, or something). After meeting a corporate executive, Dane, with an axe to grind with Satan – hey, don't we all



BOXX Vlad's form of eternal punishment is to be locked in a hall with nursery rhymes played at an *insane* volume... the scariest thing we found in the game.



have an axe to grind with the lord of all evil? – you're set on your way to fulfil the game's *one* over-riding objective, which is piss off Satan himself.

A meter sits in the top right of the screen, and random acts of violence, mayhem, murder and destruction will

God did we enjoy swooping and diving aimlessly around Hell.

Sadly, the other missions, which include running errands for Shakespeare, Blackbeard, Vlad The Impaler, and other (in)famous names, feel like little more than exercises in

“YOUR MOUTHY COMPANION KINZIE KENSINGTON SAYS ‘IT FEELS A LOT LIKE STEELPORT’ AND YOU KNOW WHAT? SHE’S RIGHT”

slowly fill up the bar, until the Lord Of The Flies is so vexed he'll take notice. So the structure mimics what veteran *Saints Row* players will understand, and after not even ten minutes of play, the sandbox opens up. The difference this time are a pair of demon-angel wings grafted to your back – these make navigation a joy, and the flying missions are some of the best moments of the game. It's not the tightest mechanic, but

joining-the-dots and Volition's new excuse to make you play all of the mini-games. It's got the structure of an MMO ('go here, do this, come back, kill that') but without any of the action that makes them addictive. It's MMO-lite, in an open world that's so overshadowed by *GTAV* it's almost laughable. It's basically an extra sandbox of mini-games.

There is some wonderful fan-service at play in the game, and if you've been

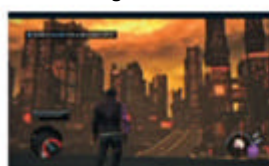
ΔOXΔ Shakespeare and some other denizens of New Hades will imbue you with new powers if you help them out.



TROPHY CABINET

GNARLY WAVE

Few games can make you feel as badass as *Saints Row*, and being able to 'car surf' an exploding comet is just one more highlight of a series that delights in silliness.



TRANSCONTINENTAL

Flying is the best part of *Gat Out Of Hell*, and learning to fly for 60 seconds without failure is a great way to master the new mobility tools.

a loyal fan of *Saints Row* up until now, there'll definitely be something in this for you. It suffers from the same thing most 'comedy' games do, though, and that's where it will highlight exactly what's wrong with the game. "Oh, collectibles. Great," quips Johnny when you collect your first orb. "Without traditional missions, this was the best way to further the story," says the game's narrator when you get another load of arbitrary missions dumped on you.

It's nice that *Gat Out Of Hell* is aware of its own problems and all; we just wish Volition did something about them.

Dom Peppiatt

VERDICT

Its good for fans of the series, but you can get better standalone DLC, or a more satisfying open world, elsewhere. Not a bad add-on, but we wouldn't call it a great one, either.

65%

Resident Evil

A few Jill sandwiches short of a picnic



DETAILS

PUBLISHER
Capcom

DEVELOPER
In-house

RELEASE DATE
Out now

PRICE
£15.99

PLAYERS
1

AGE RATING
18+

TWITTER
@RE_Games

Trophies 45



ALSO ON PS3

HD REMAKES ARE

all the rage these days, but there's a world of difference between redoing a landmark game

that was punching above its weight on last-gen tech like *GTA V* and doing a remake of a remake of a PlayStation game which, for all its faults, still actually holds together pretty well. It's an intrinsic problem with updating an update – it's naturally gonna behind the curve by today's standards but at the same time, it's equally likely to miss the magic of the original game.

Make no mistake about it – *REmake* was a masterpiece back in the day, a triumph on both technical and design levels that brought survival horror bang up to date. That was 2002, but in some respects, it's still just as good, largely because survival horror has more or less died out. New areas, enemy types, puzzles and story scenes build on the foundations of the original game brilliantly and sure enough, this is still a

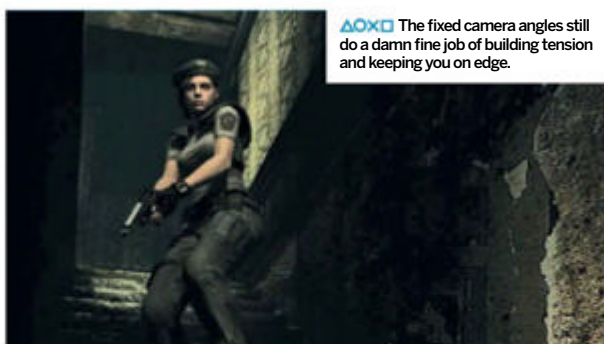
masterclass in genre fundamentals.

Ammo comes in limited supply, inventory space must be managed to ensure you have room for all the weapons, puzzle objects and healing items, while slots also sometimes need to be saved for Ink Ribbons in order to save your game – a move that continues to divide opinion nearly 20 years on. New players may find this restrictive but it's a challenge worth rising to, especially in today's climate where waypoints, hints and men to follow make most games so simple that they might as well play themselves while spitting out Trophies. Speaking of which, anyone put off by the general hassle of lugging puzzle pieces around a labyrinthine mansion probably shouldn't look at the Trophy list, as they'd probably explode at the suggestion of finishing the game with just the knife, or with invisible enemies. Sorry if you just exploded.

Some of the game's more anachronistic design choices are intentional rather than a sign of the

game's age, with things like the fixed camera angles and sluggish tank controls integral to the way the game is able to build tension. So while we understand why the option to switch to a directional control scheme has been implemented, it just doesn't feel right – it's too speedy and slippery for one thing, plus it presents issues when the camera angle changes suddenly. Stick with the original tank controls, however clumsy they may initially feel – it's the way the game was designed to be played and the alternative is not really an improvement.

The work that has gone into bringing environments and characters up to modern standards is far more impressive, at least for the most part. A few movie sequences and weak areas let the package down a little and really show the game's age but the upscaled rendered backdrops and redone lighting generally do a solid job of disguising the fact that this remake is over a decade old. Models look pretty



△×○ The fixed camera angles still do a damn fine job of building tension and keeping you on edge.





△×□ Defensive items were new in *REmake*, affording you a free escape when grabbed.

△×□ The first zombie reveal doesn't quite have the same impact that it once did...

△×□ Barry doesn't miss an opportunity to tell you how much better his gun is than yours.



good too, although their style and design is indicative of the source platform's inability to *quite* do realistic human characters and now they're all shiny and hi-res, there are often moments where they appear superimposed onto environments, or where clipping issues are given nowhere to hide thanks to the enhanced resolution.

without so much as a reference to a Jill sandwich, we can't help but yearn to instead return to the original mansion. It's a feeling that we can't shake on a gameplay level as well today – enough time has passed that both feel old to play so if you can put up with its dated visuals, the 1996 original remains just as entertaining as the remake. Then again,

“WE CAN'T HELP BUT YEARN TO RETURN TO THE ORIGINAL MANSION. IT'S A FEELING THAT WE CAN'T SHAKE”

One of the key changes to the 2002 remake was the completely redone script. It's still pretty hammy and so still fits the feel and tone of the game, but we can't help but miss the classic lines from the PlayStation original. Without Barry pulling the title 'Master Of Unlocking' out of his ass or telling you that a weapon is 'really powerful, especially against living things', without Richard just saying the word 'ouch' after having been bitten by a 30-foot-long poisonous snake, and

perhaps that's just the nostalgia talking. *REmake* is better on a number of levels and if you're new to the series, this is the best place to start. Ever since *RE4*, the series' action emphasis has been growing, much to the chagrin of fans, but this is the franchise at its simplest and purest, for better or for worse.

To complain that this doesn't feel like a new game would be pure folly – it *isn't* a new game, after all – but there's still merit in discussing its value as a 2015



PS4 release. Given that *REmake* had relatively limited exposure back in the day due to its GameCube-only release, and how series fans are calling for it to return to its roots, it makes sense for Capcom to test the water and see if modern gamers are on board with this survival horror classic. It's a cracking experience that shows its age a little at times, and the remaster job is decent for the most part, if rather poor at times. So while it was undeniably superb back in its day, it stands to reason that a decade of technical, mechanical and design improvements across our medium of choice should relegate a great game to simply being a good one by modern standards.

Luke Albigés

VERDICT

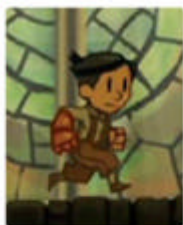
A fair remaster of a classic, *Resident Evil* is a game that holds up pretty well, but one that those not nostalgic enough likely won't enjoy as much as returning STARS veterans will.

77%

"THERE IS NOTHING BUT THE PUZZLE. THE PUZZLE IS ALL"

Teslagrad

The opposite of love is hate



DETAILS

PUBLISHER

Rain Games

DEVELOPER

In-house

RELEASE DATE

Out now

PRICE

£11.99

PLAYERS

1

INSTALL SIZE

805 MB

AGE RATING

7+

TWITTER

@Rain_Games

Trophies 37



ALSO ON PS3 & VITA

WE'RE WRITING THIS

review rather delicately as we nurse our poor strained brain back to health.

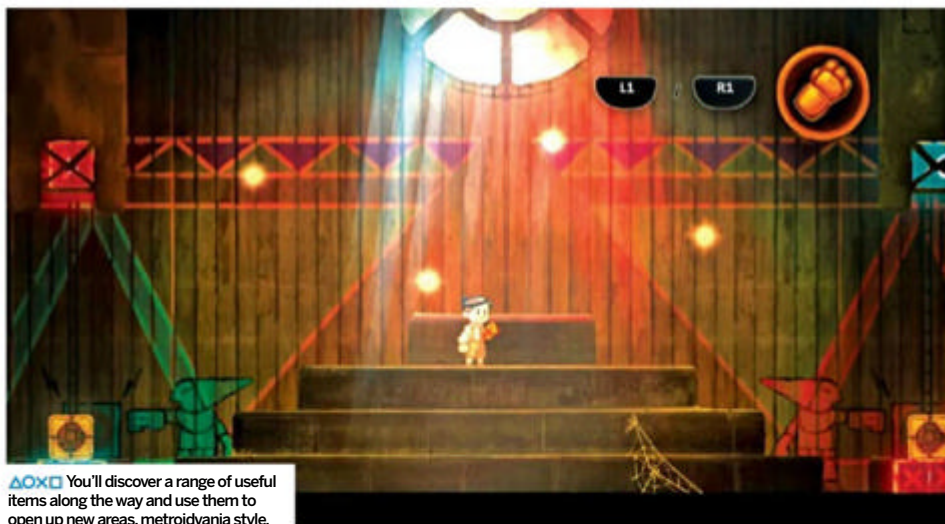
Teslagrad is a sneaky beast of a puzzle-platformer. Much like *Braid*, only requiring considerably more technical skill, *Teslagrad* seems delightfully whimsical, then proceeds to give you the kind of rage-based frustration you thought could only come from seeing a friend beat your epic high score by a couple of points. With an inventive puzzle system involving reactive blocks, little Jonny Anonymous (you're not given a name) builds up a little arsenal of tech goodies to navigate his way through the levels. It's a Metroidvania game through and through, then, with areas previously blocked off and seemingly impossible to get to becoming open to you as you collect more items that can help you around. It's a great system, plus there's a great sense of achievement as it gets much easier to travel around as you get better at platforming, not to mention the stuff you eventually kit yourself out with.

And that stuff is cool. Boots that teleport you short distances, gloves for

punching blocks into the colour of your choice (as long as you choose red or blue) to get them to react with other blocks. It doesn't all quite fit together seamlessly; there's a gun that can't be used when jumping, which just feels wrong, and the boots gave us some trouble with not reacting quick enough in conjunction with other movement, but it's still a lot of fun. That said, it does ramp up the difficulty level pretty darn quickly.

There's a clear point between the second and third bosses where *Teslagrad*

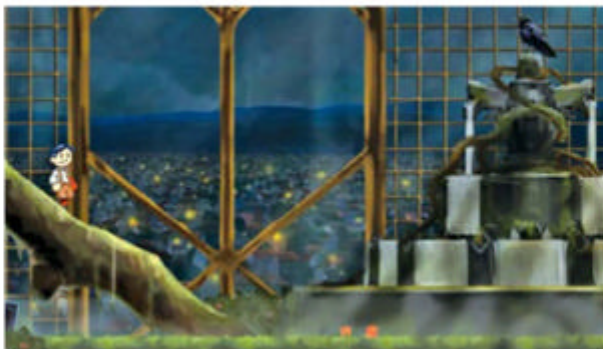
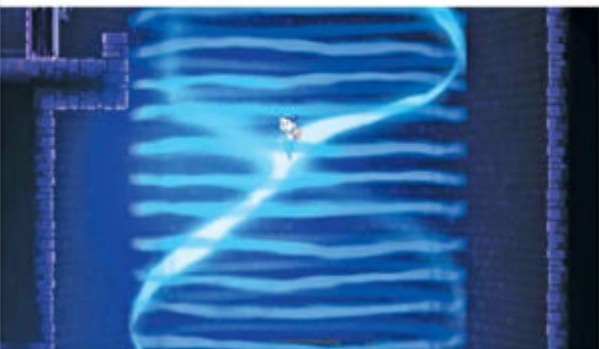
looks over at *Super Meat Boy* and gets a bit of an inappropriate crush. There are a couple of bastard hard levels that require a ridiculous amount of trying, again, again and again, and while checkpointing is for the most part excellently done, the occasional segment will have you swearing nonsensically at the screen, the game, your controller, the cat... You can, of course, cheat and use a guide, but like *Dark Souls* (yes, we're making that comparison), that really defeats the point of something like this, and robs you of the



△×× You'll discover a range of useful items along the way and use them to open up new areas, metroidvania style.



△××□ It starts with a disappointingly easy run across the rooftops, but soon progresses into something a lot more engaging.



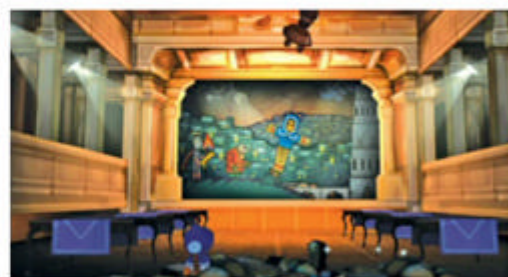
main source of enjoyment to be had here: getting through a tricky puzzle. In the latter half of the game, that joy is sadly all too fleeting before you're thrown the next one, and in most cases you'll have figured out what to do long before your hands are capable of doing it.

You will find, therefore, that every so often you'll spend a lot of time doing the same obvious start to the puzzle repeatedly, before encountering something new and accidentally electrocuting little Jonny to death. The little Teslamancer doesn't have any lives or health potions or much of a sense of self-preservation, so when you get him killed (and you will, a lot) it's back to the checkpoint immediately for you. In a lot of

△××□ Bosses are something of a disappointment, as they never deviate from their patterns.

games, that's no bad thing – we welcome difficulty – but when you're given little in the way of instruction beyond 'USE R2/L2 TO GO COLOURS AND FLY', having to redo the boring bits of a puzzle because you needed to experiment with how your new hood works is just annoying. A proper physics tutorial would have been welcome, and would have lessened our frustrations immensely. But then, in a way, that's also part of the charm of *Teslagrad*. You're thrown in immediately. No fuss, just gameplay; the story unfolds as you navigate the world. The execution needs tweaking, but the intent is spot on.

So *Teslagrad* is frustrating. For all that it requires a good high level of platforming skill to complete, some parts of it are just dull. Hearing the same boss music start over and over again as you run through the tedious bits you already know how to do like clockwork before it throws something you have to react to impossibly quickly is brain-achingly annoying. And while most boss fights don't last very long, they're unforgiving due to the one-hit KO thing. For the most part, it's a lot of old-school fun, but due to the slightest of dodgy controls, things can get tedious as you get stuck in one place. It doesn't happen very often, but pixel-perfect platforming is where the bar



needs to be for these sorts of games; sticky/floaty controls or equipment with a seemingly wavering cooldown time makes it just so frustrating. One boss fight in particular requires heavy use of the boots, and sometimes you'll be jabbing at the buttons while nothing happens. For the majority of the time, *Teslagrad* runs as smooth as you like, and these little issues are only magnified because of the nature of the game.

But, for all that it's infuriating at points (if you play sans-guide, you'll know exactly which bits we mean), it's still an addictive experience, though not in the way it intended. It's certainly enjoyable to platform around this very beautiful world, but the artistic style and lovely music become nothing but distractions to the pinpoint precision you'll need to achieve to get through a tricky puzzle, and after failing twenty times in a row, you'll be damned if you're letting it beat you. Towards the end of the game, there's a kind of grim satisfaction that comes with getting to the next checkpoint, but it's nowhere near as enjoyable a jaunt as *Fez*, or *Braid*. There is nothing but the puzzle. The puzzle is all. And that's how you'll break your brain. It's your own bloody fault if you let it get to you, but it will.

Rebecca Richards

VERDICT

If it had flawless platforming, reactive bosses, and a tighter difficulty curve, then we'd be head-over-heels for *Teslagrad*, but as it is, it's just a good little puzzle platformer that often frustrates.

75%

Game Of Thrones: Iron From Ice

Pays its debts



ALSO ON PS3

WHAT ARE THE things that make the *Game Of Thrones* TV series and novels so popular? It's the political machinations

of its smart and devious characters, its suspiring swerves and shocking moments, and its willingness to brutally disregard its audiences' affections as it plays with its protagonists' fates initially spring to mind. Those are the things that Telltale's *Game Of Thrones* needs to capture in order for it to be a success.

Of course, being as we are only one episode in to a six-part series, it's impossible to definitively judge whether the game as a whole will adequately capture all those elements to a degree that will ensure it emulates the appeal of its source material. However, a smattering of all *Game Of Thrones'* aforementioned traits are in evidence in this first episode, *Iron From Ice*, and, in that respect, the signs are very good indeed so colour us excited.

If our referencing of the TV show and novels has led you to believe that this

is a game very much aimed at fans of *Game Of Thrones*, you would be correct. Though the three members of House Forrester that you switch between while playing the game are only mentioned in passing in the novels, meaning that you don't need any prior knowledge in that respect, other parts of *Game Of Thrones'* story will be spoiled for you and references lost if you play this without being somewhat up to speed with the TV series or the books. Additionally, interactions with key characters such as Cersei, Tyrion, and Ramsey are likely to lose some of their lustre for those who don't know these characters and are oblivious to what they are capable of.

For those who do know *Game Of Thrones* in one form or another, *Iron From Ice* does an excellent job of taking the choice-based, dialogue-driven template that Telltale uses for all its games and giving it an inflection that makes it feel reflective of the *Game Of Thrones* universe. It's different to Telltale's *The Walking Dead*, for example, in which the choices you made were



BOXED Screenshots of *Game Of Thrones* look rather lovely, but it can be a little ugly in motion.

more immediate, were made with a view to surviving a particular situation and tended to impact those directly surrounding you. That's not to say that choices in *Game Of Thrones* don't feel personal, or consequential, but rather that there's greater context to any decision you make. There are house rivalries, the shifting allegiances of Lords and Ladies, not to mention the institutional systems of power that need to be considered. In that sense, your characters' situations are defined by factors outside their control in a way that is not present in the other Telltale games.

We're not suggesting that *Game Of Thrones* way of doing things somehow makes it more valuable than *The Walking Dead*. Rather, we're saying that one style makes sense within the context of a zombie apocalypse in which society has collapsed and that one makes sense within a world where an interconnected web of social alliances and rivalries

DETAILS

PUBLISHER
Telltale Games

DEVELOPER
In-house

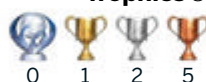
PSN PRICE
£3.99
(Season Pass £19.99)

PLAYERS
1

AGE RATING
18

TWITTER
@telltalegames

Trophies 8





“YOUR CHARACTERS’ SITUATIONS ARE DEFINED BY FACTORS OUTSIDE THEIR CONTROL IN A WAY THAT THEY’RE NOT IN OTHER TELLTALE GAMES”



AOXQ The game's art style has the unfortunate effect of making everyone look like they've got lizard skin from the neck down.



WHAT YOU'RE SAYING...



I'm staying away until they make the first episode free like they have with the last few series. Then I'll try it and consider buying from there.

Jamie Crash Green



I'm avoiding it as I don't really enjoy Telltale's take on the point & click genre; *TWD* & *TWAW* were just interactive cartoons

@tequila_ninja



It just looks like a *Walking Dead* mod. (Which I enjoyed) but been there done it already.

@MoogieBog



define it. In other words, Telltale continues to demonstrate a masterful understanding of how to re-interpret pre-existing fictions in its own way, without losing anything of what made those fictions appealing in the first place.

That's not to say Telltale is a studio that can do no wrong. In all of its games, you occasionally feel the strings being pulled behind the scenes, to the effect that the fiction is undermined and you are starkly confronted with Telltale's transparent attempts to emotionally manipulate you. There are one or two such moments in *Game Of Thrones*.

Further distracting you from the tale being told is the game's art style. Telltale has overlaid their familiar cartoon style with a watercolour like effect that's constantly in flux, but it doesn't quite work. Rather than being aesthetically pleasing, it has the effect of frequently making the game look glitchy, unnaturally drawing your eye when you

should be paying attention to what its characters are saying.

Any complaints we have with the game are relatively minor, however. After playing our political games, spilling some blood and interacting with *Game Of Thrones*' iconic cast of characters, we've left this episode with the sense that anything can happen and that we should weigh the consequences of our actions very carefully. That makes us eager to play more. What, if not that, can you ask for from the opening episode of a series?

Paul Walker-Emig

VERDICT

An excellent adaptation that captures the core elements that has made its source material so successful and one that lays strong foundations for the episodes to come.

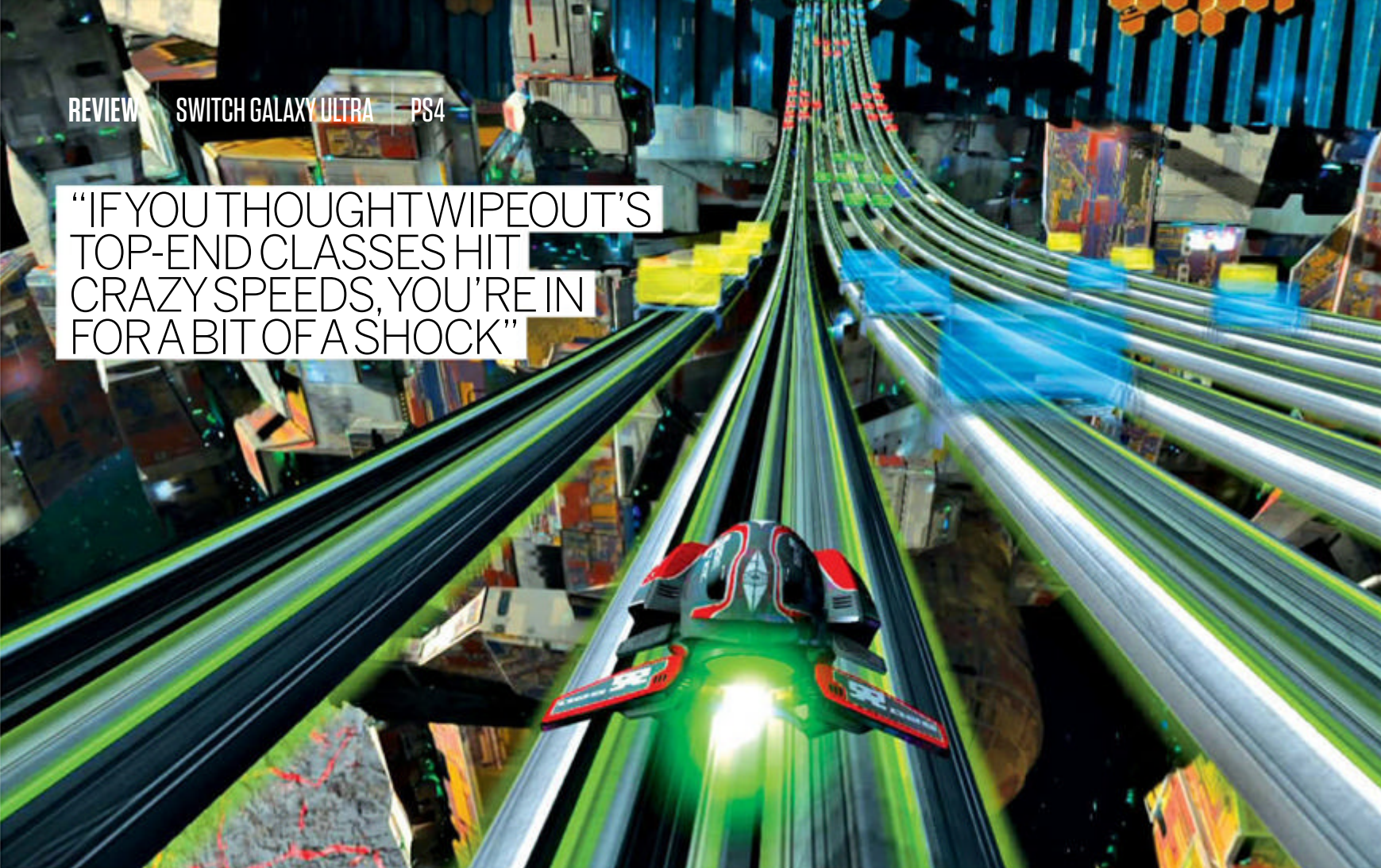
80%

FOR FANS OF...



THE WALKING DEAD If you were pleased with the job Telltale did converting *The Walking Dead* into a videogame and you like *Game Of Thrones*, this is a no-brainer.

"IF YOU THOUGHT WIPEOUT'S TOP-END CLASSES HIT CRAZY SPEEDS, YOU'RE IN FOR A BIT OF A SHOCK"



Switch Galaxy Ultra

Life in the really, really fast lane

DETAILS

PUBLISHER
Atomicon

DEVELOPER
In house

RELEASE DATE
Out Now

PSN PRICE
£11.99

PLAYERS
1-4

AGE RATING
3+

TWITTER
@SwitchGalaxy

Trophies 9



ALSO ON VITA

THE EXTRA POWER

afforded to developers by the PlayStation 4 isn't just good for graphics, you know. Games like *The*

Witcher 3 are using the hardware for scale, building a bigger world than any you'll have seen in a game before; MMOs like *Final Fantasy XIV* and *Destiny* are using it to bring more players together smoothly and easily; the likes of *Evolve* and *PlanetSide* are taking multiplayer to the next level. But this curious little indie follow-up to one of the best PlayStation Mobile games has found another way to take advantage of the power of PS4: pure speed. If you thought *Wipeout*'s top-end classes hit crazy speeds, you're in for a bit of a shock – by the time you fully upgrade *Switch Galaxy Ultra*'s best ships, you're in for a thrill ride so fast that blinking is no longer feasible if you want to nail that perfect gold medal run.

Where speedy racers like *Wipeout* can only go so fast with analogue control, the digital, lane-based racing of *Switch Galaxy Ultra* means that it can really up the pace to eye-melting levels. Your ship slowly accelerates as the course goes on, with boost pads used to refill your gauge for an added burst of speed if you're feeling brave. Make contact with any obstacle and your pace takes a huge hit, making it crucial to time your lane changes to perfection in order to avoid coloured barriers, traffic, broken sections of track and even incoming fire from enemies, which can bump you into harm's way even if you don't take a direct hit. There's a lot to think about and precious little time to react once you get up to full speed, making a flawless run of a tougher track more about memorising hazard placement and clever use of boost than just hitting the gas and hoping for the best – there *is*



00:12

106



Some other ships like to change lanes erratically. Look forward to swearing at them.



again, these later tracks are already pretty memory-reliant when you're in one of the faster ships anyway. As more and more gimmicks come into play (from shortcut portals to balance-based jumps), your options open up in terms of approach and what you want out of a run – one route might be better for earning Credits with which to upgrade your vehicles and stock up on Passes, while another might shave off a few seconds and take you closer to that all-important gold time.

It must be said, though, that the unlock system could be a lot better. There's a total of ten Tantalum up for grabs in each course, with courses unlocked based on the total you've managed to bank so far. Trouble is, this currency only appears in the slightly clumsy into-the-screen free flight sections that come at around the halfway point in each race (positioning takes some getting used to here, but accuracy will come with time) and can be lost if you collide with anything on the way to the finish. If you're just looking to get through to the later tracks (which you will be early on, as only the faster ships are capable of gold times), this renders the first half of the course all but redundant and puts way too much pressure on the latter section. Given that the end is almost always trickier than the start, it's not uncommon to see your Tantalum reserves take a huge hit

before the finish line, making a complete rerun the only way to earn enough to progress. You'll need to replay races anyway in order to earn Credits so it's perhaps not the worst thing in the world, but it still feels a little bit misjudged.

There's a story of sorts, for some reason, but you shouldn't let that or the dreadful dialogue put you off – *Switch Galaxy Ultra* is great where it matters, which is out on the rails. It's silky smooth and insanely fast, plus races tend to be short enough that it makes a great pass-the-pad game – it's hard to watch someone else plough through a string of barriers without itching to grab the controller and do better, but it is harder still to keep up with the lightning fast action while fully aware that the eyes of the room are upon you.

If it's speed you want, you won't find a faster game on PS4 right now. And for many players, that'll likely be all the recommendation they need to leap right in and ruin their eyes for fun.

Luke Albigés

VERDICT

Do you like your action fast and frantic? You've come to the right place. Even a couple of odd design decisions don't get in the way of the high-octane thrills here, thankfully.

81%

a brake button, but to use it is to pretty much sacrifice any chance at gold medal greatness. There's no shame in feathering it in a maxed ship if it means the difference between a perfect run and a horrible accident, mind.

The colour of the gates takes on a new level of importance once Passes are introduced, effectively offering free passage through one correspondingly coloured obstacle for each you hold. These can be bought before races if you feel you need the safety net but more often, they're picked up as collectables just before a colourful barricade and you'll need to quickly react to follow the trail of your chosen tint. Later stages can play dirty with this mechanic at times – one in particular has a choice of two Passes followed by two portals, but picking the wrong combination will leave you unable to pass the barriers without having your speed crippled – but then

Ship upgrades are actually terrifying. Do we need to go faster?

REVIEW ROUND-UP

IT'S AN ACCIDENTAL celebration of all things old-school in the round-up this issue, and a Vita blowout to boot; although you *could* play some of these titles on other formats, handheld is clearly the way to go. It probably makes sense to lead on the one game of the bunch that is actually old, namely **DUKE NUKEM 3D: MEGATON EDITION [A]**. Vita's dual sticks make it a good home for FPS games, if perhaps not those that were designed before twin-stick controllers even existed – movement is fine but aiming speeds are wildly out of control until you adjust the sensitivity to account for the limited practical range of the small sticks. Even then, it's still better as a history lesson than a game to play today. Level design is often intentionally obnoxious, sprite-based characters are ill-suited to verticality of any minor degree and with its arrogant one-dimensional super-dude premise, the game feels so old that there's a constant worry that it

might wet itself at any moment and not even realise. It's a neat port, to be fair, and the ability to jump back into your run after dying at any point (akin to using rewinds in racing games) is novel, but this is the gaming equivalent of watching *Austin Powers* – you'll get a few giggles here and there but it serves better as a reminder of how far we have come.

If you'd rather stay in the past, we wouldn't hesitate to recommend **WHOA DAVE! [B]**, which shared the PS Plus

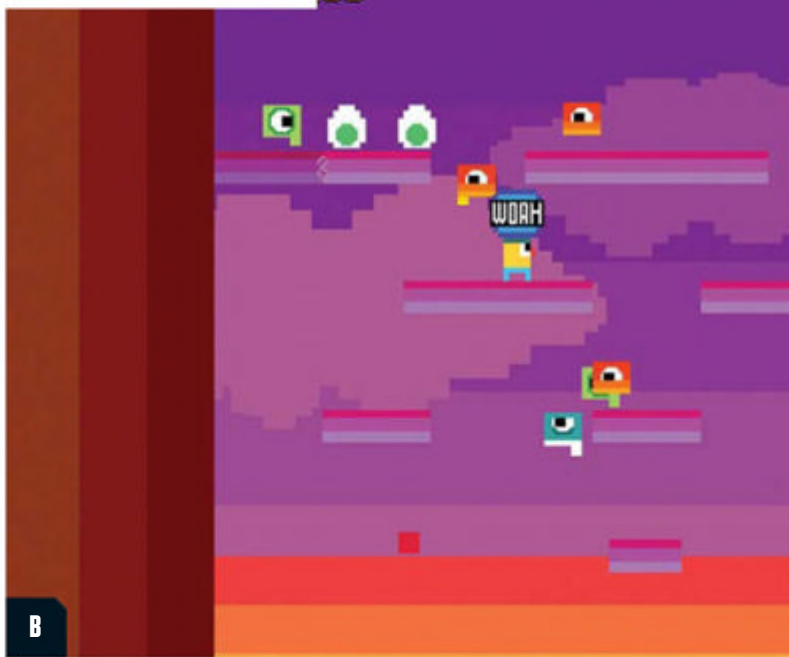
“ATLUS’ LATEST IS LIKE A SUIKODEN/ EARTHBOUND LOVECHILD WITH A MILDLY HUMOUROUS POLITICAL AGENDA”

stage with *Duke* last month. We have to say we expected something with a little more depth or nuance from the *Bit.Trip* team, although this throwback to classics like the original *Mario Bros.* and *Joust*

does still fit its snack gaming niche fairly well. Lobbing eggs and skulls around a single screen arena in search of pennies won't be to everyone's tastes, but the simplicity does make it a fairly solid score attack game, if one that doesn't hold up to sessions that stretch from minutes into hours. 'Unapologetically old-fashioned' is a term we could apply to pretty much any game featured here, but this seems like the most deserving candidate.

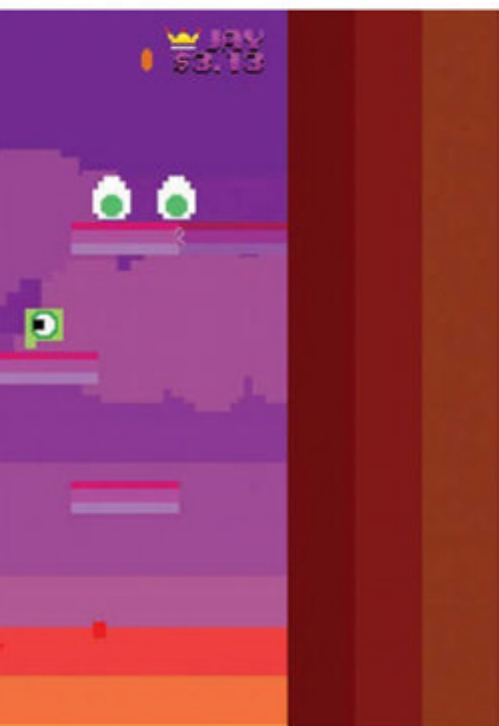
And that's saying something, since **CITIZENS OF EARTH [C]** would struggle to try harder to look, sound and play like SNES classic *Earthbound*. From the intro sequence (where the Vice President of Earth emerges from his bed fully suited) to the slightly clunky menu-driven combat system, this is clearly a love letter

△×□ If you're not a fan of simple games, there's not a great deal of point in you downloading *Whoa Dave!* at all...



△×□ We're pretty sure we've now played *Duke Nukem* on every gaming device ever made, but still the foul taste of *Duke Nukem Forever* remains.





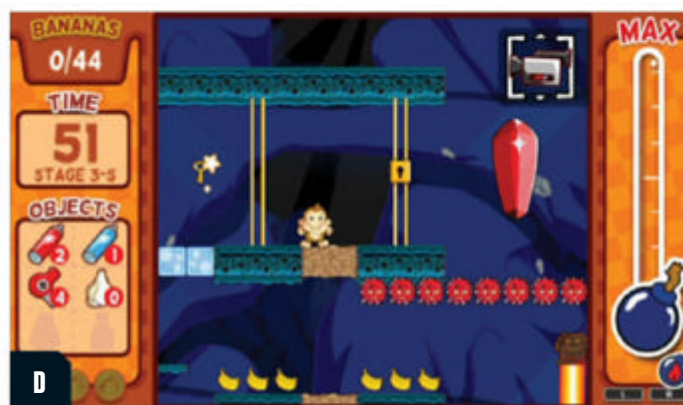
to 16-bit RPGs in general and just as with Zeboyd's output (*Breath Of Death*, *Cthulhu Saves The World* and *Penny Arcade 3/4*), there's a degree of depth and strategy to the combat that a lot of classic titles didn't necessarily have. With a decent number of recruitable party members and unique talents on each that make hiring them to your cause worthwhile, Atlus' latest is like a *Suikoden*/*Earthbound* lovechild with a mildly humorous political agenda, and it's as good/bad as that sounds, depending on how good/bad that sounds to you. Loading times, though? Really? We get that the game is using hi-res art rather than pixel-based visuals but still, *Chrono Trigger* didn't have any mudder-funking load times! Just saying...

BABOON! [D], on the other hand, is about as quickfire as games come, but then we'd expect nothing less from something that looks like it was meant to be played in a browser window. Disappointingly, the trailers featured a super-cute claymation version of the



game's hero and looked awesome, but the game itself instead settles for simple 2D characters. We know we said we were dealing mostly in retro currency here but in truth, *Baboon!* borrows much from modern mobile games – the fast-paced ascension of *Doodle Jump*, the collectable compulsion of *Jetpack Joyride* and the trajectory management of *Angry Birds* are fused together here to create a kawaii Frankenstein's monster of a game that isn't too bad. Structure is such that precision and speed can be handled separately until later on, by which point you should have either got your angles down or gone back to playing something that actually tastes of anything anyway.

We may as well end on a high note, because they don't come much higher



ΔOXΔ It takes a little while to learn the trajectories but once you get them down, there's an odd satisfaction to the explosive platforming.

ΔOXΔ If you can get your combo meter this high, you're doing pretty damn well. Input timing is way harsher than in a lot of games...

than notes that humans can't physically sing. Yes, the vocaloids are back and **HATSUNE MIKU: PROJECT DIVA 2ND [E]** is arguably even better than the original game. Again, it's an old-school controller-based rhythm action game – the soundtrack has fewer duds than the first game's but at the same time, it does seem to lack a *Black Rock Shooter* or similar standout track. Otherwise, it's more of the same, in the best possible way. Tap along to gloriously ridiculous J-pop music, dress the pretend singers up how you like and generally have a lovely time. By its very nature, it's not going to appeal to everybody. But if you enjoyed the likes of *PaRappa*, *Vib Ribbon* or even *Rock Band Blitz*, you might find yourself dragged into a new form of rhythm action heaven/hell – we have not really decided which it is yet, but we do know that we are having a really nice time. The postcard is on its way...





PUBLISHER EA | DEVELOPER CRITERION | FORMAT PS2

RELEASE DATE 10 SEPTEMBER 2004 | PLAY SCORE 96% | METACRITIC SCORE 93/100

The Making Of... BURNOUT 3 TAKEDOWN

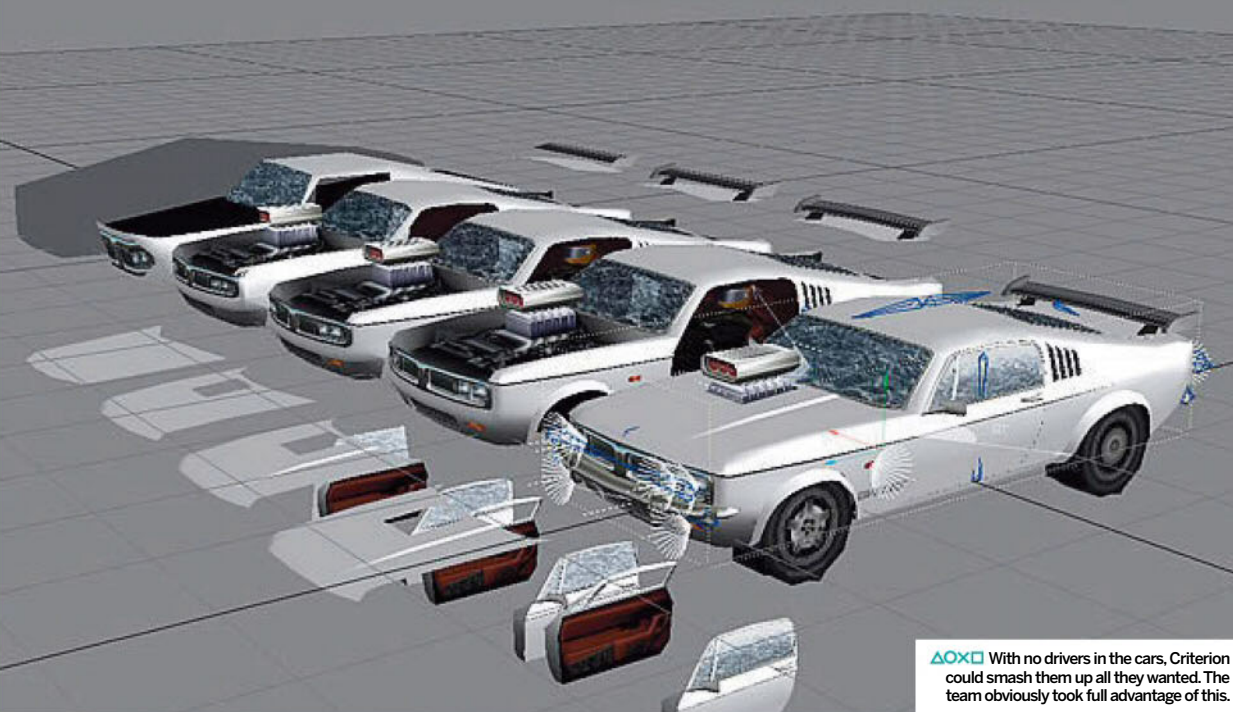
PlayStation consoles have played host to countless awesome racing games, but few developers can offer the exhilarating four-wheeled carnage of Criterion's stunning Burnout series. Luke Albigés boosts to 88mph to travel back in time to the racer that made crashing cool



It's a simple fact that a good 95 per cent of people don't play racing games properly. Outside of the handful of hardcore enthusiasts who drive sensibly and finish every race with a pristine paint job, most of us would rather use other cars as cornering aids or give annoying rivals a cheeky tail nudge to see them spin out if it means securing a podium place. Arcade racers had long made trading paint to gain positions the norm, so it's amazing that it took until 2004 for a game to fully embrace this competitive combat aspect and really go to town with it. But what's more amazing is that this incredible racer nearly didn't get off the starting grid at all – a former run-in with EA over a botched attempt to reboot 8-bit classic *Skate Or Die* seemed to kill Criterion's chances of working with the publishers, but the team was approached all the same by EA's Bruce Macmillan at E3 2003 with an offer the studio couldn't refuse. Only Criterion did.

"We just said no," Criterion's Alex Ward tells us when recounting EA's olive branch extension and proposal to work together again. "We'd been through it, seen the team, seen the stress, seen the ruin. We said we didn't want to do it that way. So he said 'how about we do a game you want to make? How about we do *Burnout 3*?' and we just said 'no chance.'" The studio gradually came around to the idea of doing a new *Burnout*, but its next visit to EA would see the team armed with a list of demands, as Ward explains. "We said we'd think about it but there'd be conditions. 'Nobody comes to Criterion,' we said: 'you'll leave us alone if we're going to do this. We make the game, so you have no say in what this game is going to be.' We'd agree the terms of the deal, show them the game in January and they'd then go and put it on the shelves. So amazingly, we found ourselves starting *Burnout 3*. We had to prove ourselves. We had the best tech in the world, the best team in the world and we were going to make a racing game like no other."

AOX The design documents for *Takedown* make for absolutely fascinating reading.



ΔOXΔ With no drivers in the cars, Criterion could smash them up all they wanted. The team obviously took full advantage of this.



Not a bad mission statement all things considered, and work on the project commenced quickly and smoothly. True to its word, the studio had a playable build ready to show EA by January 2004 and within just six months, the basic framework and gameplay loop of *Takedown* was already

“WE WERE TALKING ABOUT SHOWING THE TAKEDOWNS AND EVERYONE WAS LIKE, ‘ARE YOU FKING MAD?’”**

coming together. We were lucky enough to actually play this submission build a few years back and it's amazing how close in terms of gameplay and tone it was to the finished product – presentation and polish came on a long way in the months that followed but the team had managed to produce something in half a year that already outclassed its peers in terms of playability. For all that it wanted to go solo,

however, Criterion still had to work with an EA producer on *Takedown*, in this case Mark Webster, who details developing the act of taking down another driver from a novel gameplay mechanic into 'The X', the game's focus and main selling point, something that permeates the entire game and makes it stand head and shoulders above the competition.

“We were talking about showing the takedowns and everyone was just like ‘are you f**king mad? You want to change the camera?’ No-one had ever done that before, right?” Webster laughs. “You’re playing a racing game, you’re driving a car and you’re gonna look back to something and come back to the car? It’ll never work. But it did.” He’s not wrong. In fact, showing the resulting carnage after you nudge another racer into an oncoming lorry or smash a car against the trackside barriers proved to be the real punch-the-air, high-five-everyone-in-the-room moment of the game. We all love to watch replays of our finest moments,

BLUFFER'S GUIDE

Everything you need to know in five facts



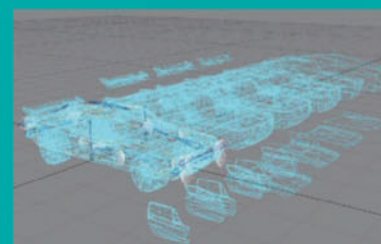
1 *Takedown* tasked players with smashing their way to the front of the pack – a series first.



2 The rejigged Crash mode used the new collision physics to create an all-new game mode.



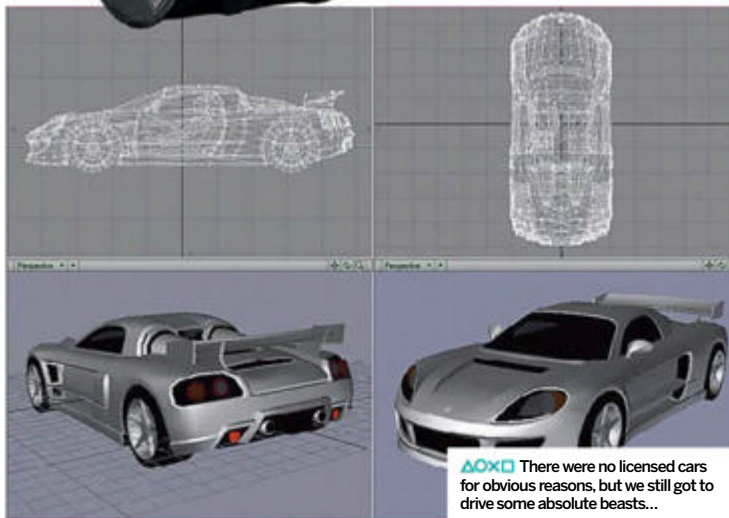
3 *Takedown* boasts a brilliant soundtrack, tied together by the drive of DJ Stryker.



4 It was the first game in the series to introduce online play, offering intense races.



5 To promote *Burnout 2*, publisher Acclaim planned to pay off real life speeding tickets of gamers.



ΔΟΧΔ There were no licensed cars for obvious reasons, but we still got to drive some absolute beasts...



ΔΟΧΔ Once you get good, you can keep chaining drifts for ages. It's the key to winning harder races.

FURTHER READING



OLDER – DESTRUCTION DERBY

This title was all about smashing cars: Criterion took that focus and applied it to a traditional racing game formula rather than arena-based carnage. The results speak for themselves, as *Takedown* demolished every combat racer that had come before it.



NEWER – SPLIT/SECOND

Members of the *Burnout* team would go on to work on *Black Rock*'s excellent explosive racer, which *Takedown*'s creative manager Paul Glancey claims "wouldn't have turned out as [it] did without a little bit of *Burnout 3* influence."

STANDOUT MOMENT



ROAD RAGE

It's all over the front page...

Taking a rival down in order to steal first place proved to be a real thrill, and a high point of the game, the camera panning back to show your victim's car mangled and smashed to bits. But in the space of a regular race, you were unlikely to see this awesome spectacle more than a handful of times. Enter Road

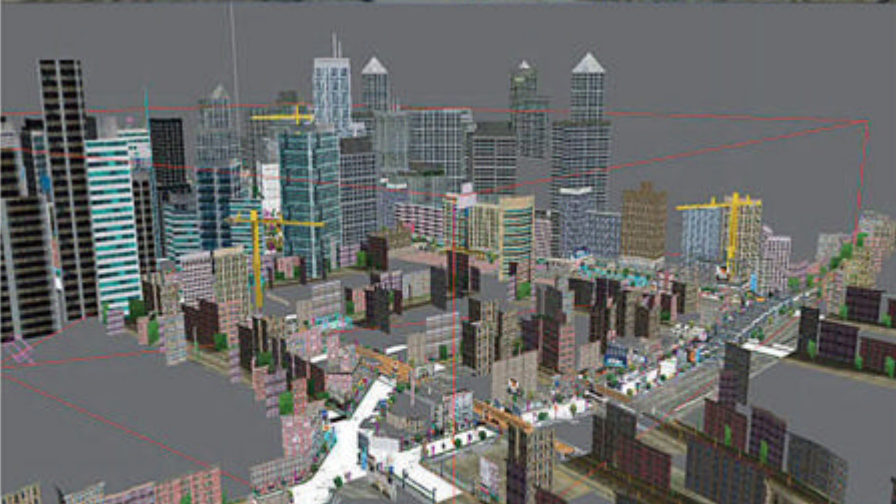
Rage mode, where a procession of racers await as you speed through the streets and the goal is to reach a certain number of eliminations before time expires. Experts could smash the target scores to extend their timer and set some pretty crazy records, creating *Takedown*'s finest pass-the-pad experience.

be it a crazy *Towerfall* trick shot kill or a net-busting winning goal in *FIFA*, and Criterion managed to find a way to work these visual rewards into the gameplay itself. The camera pulls back show the twisted metal in slow motion and your car goes into auto-drive mode to allow you to bathe in hubris for a moment, before the camera pulls back to the race a couple of seconds later and the high octane madness continues. And should you be on the receiving end of this treatment, all is not lost – in an ingenious betrayal of logic and physics, you're gifted minor control over your wrecked vehicle for one last ditch attempt to take someone else down with you. Aftertouch was as inspired an addition as the takedown camera itself, one final chance to turn failure into success and find thrills even in crashing out of a race.

Given the modern drive for games to run at 1080p and 60fps wherever possible, it's fair to consider this something that developers have only recently started to take seriously. Fair, but still inaccurate – coder Alex Fry tells us of his insistence to keep the racing locked at 60. "They said 'just run it at 30,' and I was just like 'You don't

know what you're talking about!' I couldn't cope with that suggestion," he says. The issue was seemingly that the crazy crash physics and effects were too much for a PS2 engine to manage at such a smooth frame rate, so a compromise was reached that offered the best of both worlds. "We came out of that meeting and we realised that the crashes were slower – you weren't going at 200 miles an hour and you don't need that instant twitchy response. We could make it look amazing. It was worth it so we had that final acceptance that 30 was fine for the crashes, and we could literally tenfold the amount of particles and debris and stuff. The spectacle was just so much more important than the frame rate at those moments in the game."

There were compromises to be made elsewhere too, another notable one being the name changes that most of the in-game events underwent. Hell, the game itself had trouble enough finding its own name – the team toyed with the likes of *Fuel Injection*, *Crash And Burn*, *Seek And Destroy* and even *See You In Hell* as subtitles for the racer, and it's clear from their tone today that they're confident



that they settled on the right one in the end. Sadly, not all of the events would have such snappy names, largely due to limitations in the code itself. "The space we had in the front end was very small, so lots of the names had to be truncated," explains Ward. "The worst [name] was one called 'Chilly Con Carnage' but it got truncated to 'Chilly Crash,' which doesn't even make any sense!" We can't honestly say that the names of the events had any kind of negative impact on our enjoyment of the game but when you're analysing something so close to perfection as this,

EA showcase event] I met Karl Hilton from Free Radical," he recalls. "They were apparently going through their own *Skate Or Die* experience with *TimeSplitters: Future Perfect*. I asked how it was going and he said 'It's a nightmare – these guys are just horrendous. What's all this stupid 'X' bullshit? We're doing a really good game but these guys are just a pain in the ass. They want so much input, they want to visit our office, they tell us this, that and the other and that it's just not good enough. I just want to tell them to f*** off.' And that was us a year before with *Skate Or Die*. I sat

"THE WORST [NAME] WAS ONE CALLED 'CHILLY CON CARNAGE' BUT IT GOT TRUNCATED TO 'CHILLY CRASH,' WHICH DOESN'T EVEN MAKE SENSE."

you really do have to engage Nitpicking Mode to find any actual flaws.

Although Criterion may have been resistant to EA's involvement at first, the team clearly came to see value in the publisher's influence and input, leading Ward to be able to share the merits, however initially unclear, of the collaborative process with a fellow developer. "At [an

down with him and told him not to be afraid of this process – you just need to give them what they need. All they're saying is that they don't get your game and they find it hard to talk about."

Both teams evidently managed to find a way to work with the publisher, as both *Future Perfect* and *Takedown* turned out excellent. But



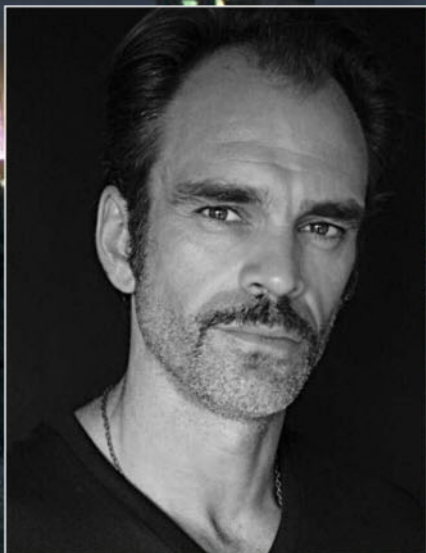
UNLIKELY ORIGINS

Takedown's development started with... a skating game?

Criterion's first project with EA was trying to bring back 8-bit skating title *Skate Or Die* for a new generation, but it sounds as though there was a pretty severe difference of opinion between studio and publisher as to what the game should be. "There was that experience from when I went skating in real life that just wasn't captured in videogames," explains designer Craig Sullivan, whereas EA apparently wanted the game to be a more edgy open-world skater for the *GTA* generation. The creative tug of war took its toll on the development team, who ultimately walked away from the deal, in the process burning bridges with EA. Or so they thought at the time – Criterion would later be approached by EA's Bruce Macmillan to develop *Burnout 3* on its own terms.



just like the vocal fan base who, to this day, scream for a new *Burnout* in the vein of *Burnout 2* or *Burnout 3* or *Burnout Paradise* or whatever their favourite is, even Criterion is aware that *Takedown* was perhaps the peak for the excellent series. "With *Revenge*, we didn't recreate what we had with *Burnout 3*," Ward admits. "And while *Revenge* was *Revenge* and it took its own path, I think we look back and think we should really have just made a sequel to *Burnout 3*. But it was too bloody obvious! *Burnout 3* is clearly the game I'm most proud to have worked on. The team were a great bunch of people and we had a good laugh making it." And we had a good laugh playing it too, although it did make us even worse at every other racing game to follow – we can't even look at a rival racer in a game today without visualising their car wrapped around the back of a lorry and our on-track etiquette has never been worse...



INTERVIEW

VOICE OF A MADMAN

We speak to Steven Ogg, the face and voice of GTA V's infamous Trevor Phillips about life after starring in one of the biggest games of all time

Steven, how's another day in the life of Trevor Phillips treating you?

I am good, just trying to cross tasks off the list. Like, what the f***? When did this become life? Writing a to do list, and doing it?

Probably around a year ago!

It's unbelievable, I think I need something more out of my life than this.

You could always do another videogame?

F*** videogames! [laughs]

How was the audition process for GTA V? Is it similar to other auditions that you've done in the past?

It's pretty much the same thing. It's actually funny, because the four years I spent working on *GTA*, from the get-go it's cloaked in secrecy – I didn't even know what the project was. It was just an audition like any other – aside from there was no script. There was a dummy script, it wasn't the real one that we would shoot, which four years ago

I thought was quite bizarre. Whereas now on the other projects I've worked on, I just shot HBO's *Westworld* with *Interstellar*'s Jonathan Nolan, and it was the same thing. *GTA* has actually been a lovely training ground for what the business is nowadays. People are so protective of their products now, that a lot of time they don't provide

“WHO HASN'T THOUGHT, 'MAN I'D JUST LOVE TO F***ING CLOCK THAT IDIOT UPSIDE THE HEAD'”

actors with more than what they need to know, because they don't want things released.

Did you have to experiment with your vocals for Trevor's voice or is it just what you sound like when you are angry?

I think it would be different if Trevor was British, and I was doing a British accent throughout, or

some accent, it would have changed it somewhat. This is one of those actor questions – ‘is the character you?’ Well, all I've got is f***ing me. I don't become someone else. [laughs] You don't change who you are, so obviously, his anger... generally, for instance, if I'm in an elevator – and this has happened before – and I'm talking to

someone about what's just happened on the streets of New York. You know, ‘I'm f***ing cycling down here, and this F***ING cab just F***ING cut me off,’ and then if I'm getting angry talking like that I've had heads turn towards me and go, ‘holy shit! You're Trevor, right?’ [The voice] comes from me – if I curse or get angry, there's a recognition now.

GTA V was fully motion captured – is it difficult to play a very physical and violent character when having to interact with other actors?

It was fun! When you get to be physical, it sort of informs and motivates your character more. One of the first days of shooting *GTA* was when I had

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to stamp in Johnny's head from *Lost & Damned*. I talked about his girlfriend, discussed some things with him and then bring him close to me and proceed to smash him with a bottle and stomp on his head. When I'm doing that, it's like, 'oh wow, shit! That's interesting.' It's quite a release when you're on set and you're stomping on a head. It's real interesting.

Were there any scenes, sequences, or any lines of dialogue in the script that made you feel uncomfortable?

That's the way Trevor speaks, the way he communicates, that's the way this character rolls. It's my job to do it, so I didn't really... of course, a lot of times it was very funny. Like, 'Oh my god, I've got to say this?' There weren't any times I was cringing, thinking I can't say *this* or I can't say *that* word. That doesn't mean I necessarily agree with [all] of it, but that's part of the challenge, right? If you're playing a character that you don't necessarily agree with the way he's going about things or the way he chooses to say these things,

well, it's my job is to make them believable. He says some funny shit, however crude and inappropriate it is. It is funny.

He is funny, and in many ways, he is a brilliant reflection of our culture today.

I think he's like the Id of the game. If you're going to go into this world – which is fantasy – and you're someone who gets to say what he wants to say, f*** what he wants to f*** and do what he wants to do! If I was a gamer, that's the sort of character I would be interested in. If you walk down the street or in a normal situation, who hasn't thought, 'man I'd just love to f***ing clock that idiot upside the head,' but if you do that in real life there are consequences! But, if you're going to go into a world of escape and fantasy, shit, that's pretty fun!

Do you still speak with your co-stars Shawn Fonteno [Franklin Clinton] and Ned Luke [Michael De Santa]?

We do still keep in touch, though I don't get to see them as much as I would like. But we formed a

brotherhood, really. It was three and a half years of working on a project with these guys; you share a lot of ups and downs. It's part of the beauty of the business, really – you can make these intense relationships. Ned and Shawn are salt of the earth. Really, the blessing of the job was meeting all these amazing people, the crew, the director, everyone. It was a really great thing, those boys will always be in my circle.

If the you could voice Trevor again – in a expansion pack, for example – would you do it?

I certainly wouldn't turn down the opportunity to revisit that character again, just because it is such a wonderful character. It was so much fun, I think there is a lot can be done with him. It was such a wonderful experience, such a great group of people and Rockstar's wonderful to work with, so, yeah, I certainly wouldn't discount any opportunity [to return].

You can pick up *GTA V*, featuring Steven Ogg as the brilliant Trevor Phillips on PS3 and PS4.

EXTENDED PLAY

SAINTS ROW

With two games from the notoriously silly Saints Row franchise only just out the door, now is the ideal time to revisit a series that started life as a GTA clone and evolved to find its own fractious, ostentatious and eclectic identity...



RE-ELECTED

■ **THE PRETTIFIED HD** version of *Saints Row IV* on PS4 is not only an aesthetically tweaked version of the game that was released on PS3, but contains all the DLC that was released for that version. As such, it's an ideal opportunity for those of you who missed *Saints Row IV* on PS3, for whatever reason, to get involved. The fourth entry is something of a departure from

what came before in that you're basically a superhero. That means you can run up walls, leap whole blocks and make use of superpowers in combat. Mixing those abilities with *Saints Row*'s ridiculous melee moves and an arsenal that includes the likes of the Dubstep Gun makes for some characteristically ridiculous and explosive combat encounters.



GAT OUT OF HELL

■ **LONG TIME FANS** of *Saints Row* and *Saints Row IV* in particular, will want to get involved with *Gat Out Of Hell*. Available on its own, or as part of a package with *Saints Row IV Re-elected*, the game takes the superhero elements introduced in the fourth game and takes it to a new setting. This one stars series' favourites Johnny Gat and Kinzie Kensington in a quest to save the leader of the Saints from their captivity in Hell. We're not talking a metaphorical Hell – the Saints' leader has quite literally been kidnapped by the devil and taken to the underworld. *Gat Out Of Hell* is more of a standalone expansion than a new entry in the series proper, but, if you like *Saints Row*, that's no bad thing.



BACK TO THE SOURCE

■ **FOR MANY FANS**, *Saints Row: The Third* is the best in the series, so there's a good argument to make in favour of that being the game you should go back and play. Perhaps more interesting, though, is to go back to where it all started. Maybe it would be a little harsh to say that the first *Saints Row* was nothing but a *GTA* clone but

there is undoubtedly an element of truth in that. It would go on to find its own identity, proving to be more than an attempt to cash in *GTA*'s success in the long run and its interesting to look back at where it all started to try and find those seeds in the game that kicked off the most over-the-top open world series out there.



DLC

■ **IF YOU'RE UP** to date with your *Saints Row* games and still want more, it's worth bearing in mind that there's plenty of DLC that's been released. For *Saints Row IV*, for example, there are a number of costume and mission packs available. Enter *The Dominatrix* sees the Saints go up against an AI known as The Dominatrix, while *How*

The Saints Save Christmas is all about saving Santa and, by extension, our favourite holiday. If you want to go as far back as *Saints Row: The Third*, there's a bunch of DLC available for that, too, including the bizarre *Genkibowl VII* expansion and mission pack *The Trouble With Clones*, in which you go up against a clone of Johnny Gat.



JUST CAUSE

■ **IF YOU'VE GOT** absolutely no more *Saints Row* left to play, but want something that scratches that same itch, we recommend you get yourself some *Just Cause*. When it comes to ridiculous open world games, *Just Cause* is the closest you're going to get to *Saints Row*. *Just Cause 2* is, after all, a game that allows you to attach enemies to explosive barrels before blowing them up and grapple on to jet planes. With *Just Cause 3* currently in development, too, there's even more incentive to give *Just Cause 2* a try.

BLUFFER'S GUIDE

KINGDOM HEARTS



WHAT IS IT?

■ **THE ORIGINAL MODERN** day crossover and still pretty much the best example of how to do fan service right (no, *DOA*, not *that* kind of fan service), *Kingdom Hearts* is a beautiful and confusing action-RPG series that weaves together characters and worlds from classic Square Enix series, *Final Fantasy*, along with those of media behemoth Disney, all tied together by a bewilderingly over-complicated original story. It's also responsible for 90 per cent of the belts, buckles and zips in modern gaming. The first game launched on PS2 in an era when pretty much every officially licensed game based on a TV or movie property was dire and it represented a unique and comparatively adept way to explore familiar worlds at the same time as enjoying new stories.

Crossovers might be more common today but most take the form of fighting games or other simple affairs where story takes a back seat to spectacle, meaning that *Kingdom Hearts* still feels original in that it places the spotlight on an original character in the form of recurring hero Sora and uses its many and varied IP guest stars as just that – supporting cast members and borrowed sound stages on which to tell an original story. Granted, this core narrative might be a bit of a jumbled mess and the main satisfaction of the game may still come from seeing these disparate worlds and characters thrown together, but the fact that the series is still going strong over a decade on is proof enough that what it is doing is working well enough to retain a loyal fan base.



THE STORY SO FAR

■ **OKAY, PAY ATTENTION** – there'll be a test at the end. Okay, there won't, because the story is such a convoluted mess that even as fans, we probably wouldn't know whether you were right or not. So, *Birth By Sleep* is the first game chronologically, although it doesn't even feature Sora. Instead, it tells of how three different Keyblade masters would come to set in motion the events of the original game (*BBS* hero Ventus' very heart is absorbed by Sora, which in turn will later become his Nobody, Roxas – we told you this was complex, right?), where Sora and his friends Riku and Kairi are torn away from their island home by dark powers. On the orders of King Mickey, Donald Duck and Goofy are dispatched to help Sora locate his friends, and the trio trek around various Disney worlds only to find Kairi missing and Riku consumed by evil.

Despite eventually managing to rescue Kairi and Riku, the group is quickly torn apart again, then a girl called Namine begins rewriting Sora's memories of Kairi to be of her instead, setting up *Kingdom Hearts 2*'s opening where Sora's Nobody, Roxas, is the initial playable character. Sora manages to absorb Roxas' heart (read: Ventus' heart) in order to 'awaken' and he then sets about dealing with Organisation XIII, a group we learn a lot about in *358/2 Days* as Roxas deals with their internal struggles as well as his own. Sora is able to thwart XIII's plot in *Kingdom Hearts 2*, but the group is still at large even by the end of the game chronology, suggesting that they may well appear in *Kingdom Hearts 3* alongside other recurring enemies such as the Heartless, the Nobodies, and a whole host of Disney villains. Phew...



WHERE TO START

■ **IF YOU WANT** any chance at all of following the story (trust us, that was a *seriously* simplified version of events right there), your best bet is to do all the existing games in chronological rather than release order. Getting the two HD Remix releases will enable you to do just that without having to suffer through the weaker games – *358/2 Days* and *Re:Coded* only appear in cutscene format – so that's the best place to start, but even then, the order you should play them in isn't necessarily clear. Technically, you want to do *Birth By Sleep*



then the first game, followed by *Re:Chain Of Memories* and *Kingdom Hearts 2*. You can watch through the *358/2 Days* movies before starting *KH2* if you like, but it's largely just used to flesh out Organisation XIII, then watch *Re:Coded*'s movies after finishing *KH2* if you can be bothered. They don't offer a great deal, to be honest. The only missing link is the 3DS release, *Dream Drop Distance*, which sits right at the end. It's okay, but it's likely you'll be able to pick up *KH3* when it comes out easily enough without it.



ANY SPIN-OFFS?

■ **TECHNICALLY SPEAKING, *Kingdom Hearts*** itself could be seen as a spin-off from the *Final Fantasy* games and various Disney properties it borrows from and as such, there aren't strictly speaking any *KH* spinoffs. There may only be two numbered games in the series but the subtitled ones all fit into the story – *Birth By Sleep* sets the whole mess up, *Chain Of Memories* serves to tie the two main games together and *Dream Drop Distance* closes the book ready for *Kingdom Hearts 3* to open it anew. *358/2 Days* and *Re:Code* are more filler and are the closest things to spinoffs, but even they offer some insight into the story.



ANYTHING BESIDES GAMES?

■ **YOU BET. THE** series naturally got a manga retelling, where it still doesn't make all that much sense, not least because rights issues meant that translated versions stopped being released halfway through the *KH2* storyline. Fantasy Flight Games also released a collectible card game based on the series but again, it was dropped before we could catch up to the Japanese print, leaving some deck types weaker than others. Merchandise is where it's at, with all kinds of awesome figures, toys and trinkets based on the series' characters.

WHO ARE THESE GUYS?



SORA

The hero of the series despite the fact he insists on wearing a clown's old hand-me-down shoes, he's a Keyblade wielder with the power to close and control the rifts that develop between the various worlds he visits. He holds within him the heart of original hero Ventus, which explains how his Nobody is able to take on a normal human form as Roxas rather than just turning into a generic enemy type as seems to happen in most other cases.



DONALD DUCK

The vintage cartoon favourite becomes a wizard in the *Kingdom Hearts* universe, for reasons we'll never understand. Even more confusing is how he is able to learn *Final Fantasy* spells – perhaps he's the only person (well, duck, but you know...) who has played *Final Fantasy VIII* more than we have and has absorbed the knowledge of its spells to a master level? Whatever the case, he's fragile in combat so do your best to keep him safe.



GOOFY

If we were going to pick one Disney character to tank for us, we would never have picked this idiot. To be fair, he does a pretty good job at shutting down threats and shielding the party from harm given that all he has is a comically undersized buckler but still, Goofy? Really? As soon as the game offers us the chance to recruit a real fighter like Beast or Tarzan, Goofy gets benched in a heartbeat. Sorry buddy. Anyway, what even are you?



MASTERCLASS

LITTLEBIGPLANET 3

You think you've seen it all, then some bright spark goes and makes a 3D horror game...

■ **WHEN YOU THINK** of *LittleBigPlanet*, you think of cloth, zips, and sponge. You think of string and mechanical chains, reprogrammable AI that resembles a wooden construct with love heart eyes. You think of *cute* things, and nothing like bigsurf77's impressive level, Look Behind You, which is a dark, foreboding tromp through a haunted house.

As loveable as Sackboy is, his charming demeanour would knock the edge off any potential fear: which is why the level was created in first-person 3D. Anyone who has created a level in *LittleBigPlanet*, of whatever size, will know it to be exceptionally tricky to do anything other than a 2D stage, which makes this level all the more impressive. Its creator has instead built a clever workaround to give the impression that you're traversing in 3D, when in fact you're actually rotating

the level around a central camera. Admittedly this means the turning of your 'character' is a little slow and awkward, but hey, so was the original *Resident Evil*, right?

But of course it's not the first-person view that makes this a good horror level. That naturally helps to make things feel a little more tense, something other horror levels in *LBP* have always failed to do. Yet the real craft comes from the clever use of sound and lighting. With only a mere flashlight to guide you – and even that isn't particularly bright – it means you're left glaring at the screen, trying to make out the various details dotted throughout the spooky home. And as we know from experience, the more you concentrate, the more open to jumps and surprises you are. Of course, all of this is helped along by a really creepy selection of bumps and gurgles. We're

not sure what sounds were used or how they were altered, but there's something really unnerving and unsettling about them as you explore the building.

The level itself isn't all that compelling in terms of gameplay, sure; all you're doing is wandering around picking up notes, to be honest. But Kojima's popular *Silent Hills* demo *PT* proved there doesn't need to be much more than that involved to make you feel a bit of fear. There's a constant sense of dread throughout the level, a feeling that puts you on edge and afraid to turn around after each dead end. There is already a heap of great levels to play in *LittleBigPlanet 3*, but this one is particularly impressive not only for doing something completely different with the tone and aesthetic of the game but for its very clever method of making a first-person view.



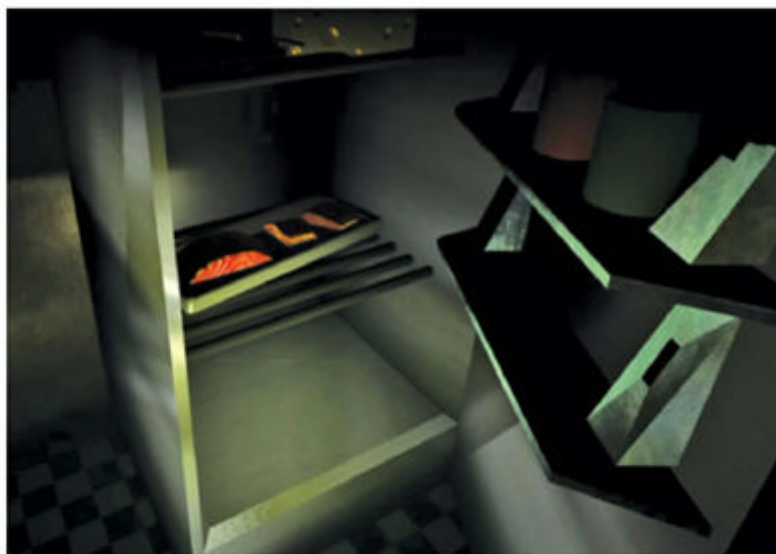
CREATOR CURATOR



We spoke to Look Behind You's creator, bigsurf77, to find out how he went about creating such a unique level



ΔOXD There's rarely a scare behind these locked doors, but that doesn't mean they're not terrifying to open.



ΔOXD There are strange images scrawled across the walls of different rooms in the house.



ΔOXD There are all sorts of mundane objects to look at early on, which adds a necessary bit of detail to the level.

So how did you manage to create a working 3D level in *LBP3*?

Actually, there is no tool to create a first-person perspective. I used a special technique that allows a 3D illusion where the level is moving instead of the player. To imagine how it looks in Create mode, it's actually a top-down level with a glitched camera so it looks like a 3D level.

Was it difficult making 3D work in a game that wasn't designed for it?

I had some problems with the rotation of the camera because the game isn't made for 3D levels like this. Furthermore, the shadows and physics were a bit weird sometimes, so I had to remove a lot of the objects I had made.

Did you use any other user-created levels to help understand how 3D can be done?

I played a level by *steve_big_guns*. He made a 3D shooter level in *LittleBigPlanet 2* which was really nice.

How tough was it to make a horror game in *LBP3*?

It is actually quite hard because *LittleBigPlanet* is a cute game, so I had to create a new atmosphere that makes people scared of what could happen in the level.

Were there any games you have played that inspired your level?

I really enjoyed playing *PT*, a demo for the upcoming *Silent Hills* horror game. The atmosphere of the game is amazing. When I played the game, I wanted to create a level similar to that, and *LittleBigPlanet 3* has the possibilities to create almost anything you want.

What are your favourite user-created levels in *LittleBigPlanet* so far?

My favourite levels in *LittleBigPlanet* are 'Super Bunnio', a 2D platformer adventure by *steve_big_guns* and 'Interkinetic' by *c_mckarney*. Both levels were perfectly made, including amazing gameplay, music and design. The way these levels are made is just brilliant, in my opinion.

Have the improvements in *LittleBigPlanet 3* helped in creating levels for you?

There are a lot of new tools and features (for example the 16 layers to create in, and new settings and effects) that made it easier to create. All the new features mean more possibilities for allowing you to create almost everything.

Do you have any ideas for levels that you would like to create next?

I would like to make small 3D games. However, there is no real 3D in the game. It would be nice to have a real 3D camera and some tools like an advanced decoration feature or an object rotator to create even more complex 3D games, but I'm also working on some platformers and a new 3D horror level.

HOWTO...

START A GAME

Attention spans are only getting shorter and... wait!
Come back here and discover the art of the opening!

■ **OPENINGS ARE IMPORTANT**; just think of Renton barreling down the street in *Trainspotting*, or the famous line from William Gibson's debut novel, *Neuromancer* – "The sky above the port was the color of television, tuned to a dead channel." The same applies to our beloved medium of videogames. What exactly is it, though, that makes for a great intro?



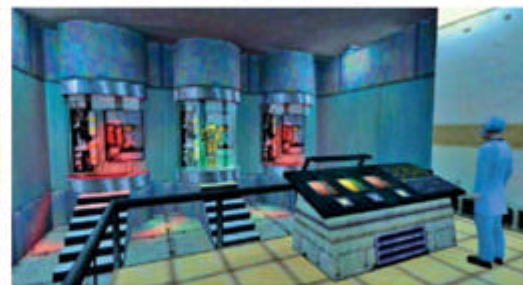
CREATE AN ATMOSPHERE

■ **SETTING THE TONE** for what is about to take place is an effective way of hooking us in. Perhaps the definitive example of a game that does just that is *BioShock*. As you descend into the iconic world of Rapture, the game introduces you to the ideology of Andrew Ryan's utopia, but, more importantly, creates a foreboding atmosphere as you realise that something has gone terribly wrong, making those first steps into the underwater city incredibly tense.



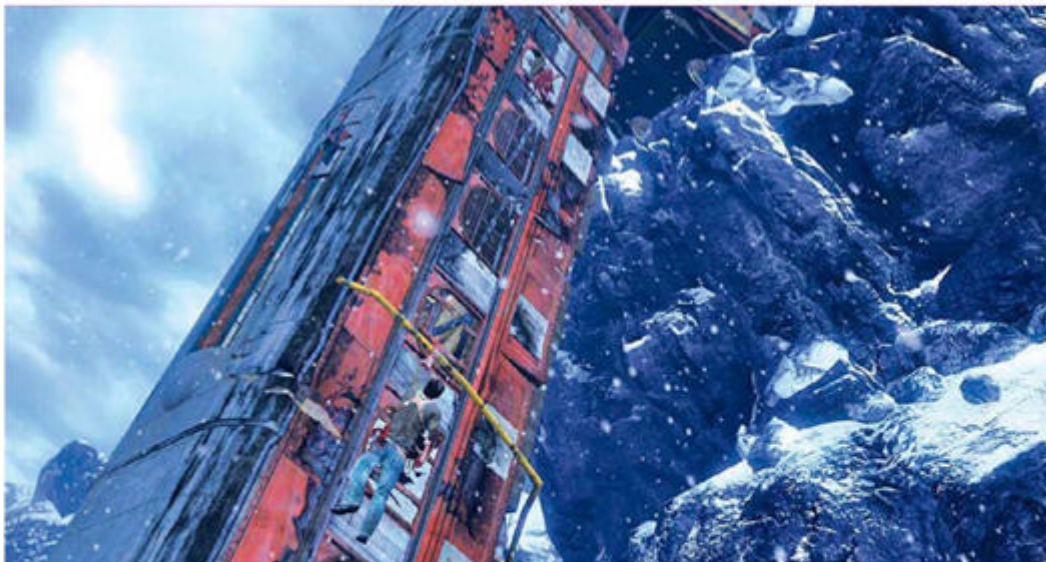
ESTABLISH THE WORLD

■ **IT'S NOT EASY** to do, but if you're able to give us a real sense of place in a game's opening moments, then we're likely to want to find out more about that world. *Half-Life* and its sequel are both excellent examples. Both take the time to let you see things in their 'normal' state – arriving at work in the case of the first *Half-Life*, for example. Laying down that groundwork to make you feel like you're in a real place makes it more significant when normality is punctured by the exceptional events that set a game's story in motion.



JUMP STRAIGHT IN

■ **RATHER THAN FAFFING** about with boring tutorials or trying to ease the player into the action, there are a few games with openings that are great by virtue of the fact that they cut to the chase and get you straight into the action. *Bayonetta* and *God Of War 3* spring to mind, but our favourite has to be the opening of *Uncharted 2*, which leaves you grasping precariously on to the last carriage of a train that's hanging off the edge of a mountain.



SURPRISE US

■ **WHETHER IT'S A** case of putting us in the shoes of a murderer as with *Fahrenheit*'s brilliant opening, pulling at our heart strings as in *The Last Of Us*, or performing a shock turn, à la *MGS2*, a game that can successfully surprise us early on is likely to also intrigue us, whether that be because we're eager to solve a mystery that's been established or to witness the aftermath of a shocking event.

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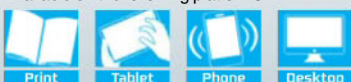


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TROPHY GUIDE

PS PLUS TROPHY GUIDE

INFAMOUS: FIRST LIGHT

PLATFORM: PS4 DIFFICULTY: 1/5

TROPHIES: 44 1 7 11 25

■ IF YOU'VE PLAYED *inFamous: Second Son* then you already know what to expect of the Trophies from its standalone DLC *First Light*. In fact, it's considerably easier, too: there are no difficulty based Trophies nor is there a morality system, so if you prefer, you can play through once on Easy and get everything you need. There's the usual collectibles and the like, too, but since it's only half the map of the original game, you won't have to spend too long mopping those up. Do this part before taking on the challenges, however, since if you want to earn the Trophies for reaching diamond rank you're going to need all the firepower you can get; though, truth be told, it isn't all that difficult. The points-based Trophies are a grind more than anything else, but remember to focus on keeping your multiplayer up in the arena. At this point you'll want to aim for '...Bada Boom' and 'Fish In A Barrel' if you haven't already got them – they're easy to do, but the survival arenas give you a much better place to dedicate time to them if you need to.



THE SWAPPER

PLATFORM: PS4/PS3/VITA DIFFICULTY: 2/5

TROPHIES: 10 0 1 5 4

■ THERE ARE ONLY ten Trophies for *The Swapper* and they require you to collect ten memory terminals. If you haven't got them all before accessing the console that requires 124 orbs then you've missed your chance and need to start over. For Terminal I, head to the far right of the top (yellow) room of the quarantine area, place a clone in the red light and walk to the right. Terminal II can be found in the bottom of a pit in the far left room of the garden area. Terminal III is at the bottom left of the cargo bay, after taking the gravity transport; use your clones to pass through what looks like a dead end. For Terminal IV, head to the top left of the research area – you'll need to step on a crate at the top of the room. Terminal VI is found in the same area as Terminal V but through a hatch in the bottom right of the area. You will need to head to the top of the long sector three elevator for Terminal VII, remember to switch gravity in the room next door. Terminal VIII is in the same room as the 66 orb console, so just place clones in the area to the right of where a rocket flew into earlier. For Terminal IX, head to the 93 orb console and you'll come to a tunnel. After switching gravity, use clones to reach the area to the left. Finally, head towards the end in the far right room of the command area and use the elevator to reach a hidden area for Terminal X.

DUKE NUKEM 3D: MEGATON EDITION

PLATFORM: VITA DIFFICULTY: 2/5

TROPHIES: 15 0 1 1 13

■ THERE'S NOT MUCH to the Trophies here, suffice to say that you will pick up most of them, including the gold Trophy, for just finishing the game anyway. You can then grab a handful more Trophies on the way to reaching the 500 kills milestone in the online Deathmatch mode. Trophy hunting is made significantly easier as you can play the game on any difficulty to get the Trophies, too – there are no difficulty-based Trophies so we would recommend playing the game on the 'Piece Of Cake' difficulty mode unless you fancy a challenge. During your playthrough you will need to find 70 secret areas, which sounds daunting at first, but there are over 300 (yes, 300) in the game so it won't pose too much trouble and you are likely to stumble across a number of them on your travels – just be thankful you don't have to hunt around for all 300. For the record, you'll find the 'exotic dancer' for the 'Shake It Baby' Trophy in the second level of LA Meltdown and the, err, 'excrement' for 'Looks Like Cleanup on Aisle 4' in the second level of The Birth.





PROTOTYPE 2

PLATFORM: PS3 **DIFFICULTY:** 1/5

TROPHIES: 44 🏆 1 🏆 2 🏆 15 🏆 26

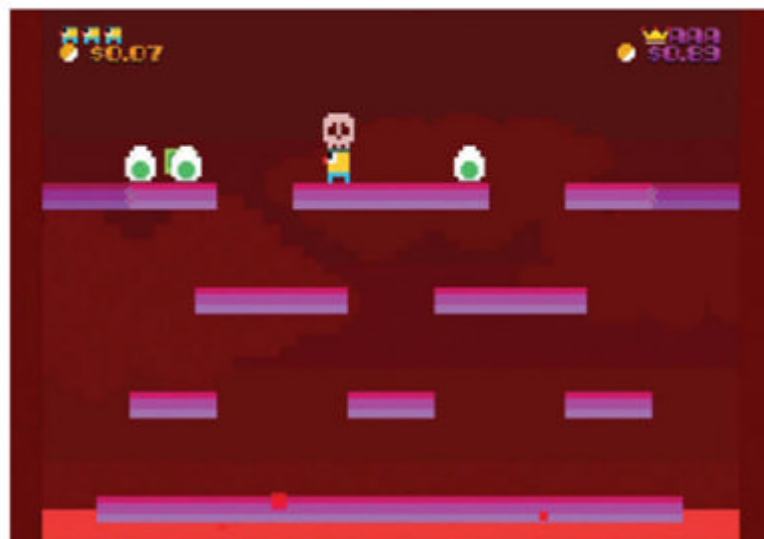
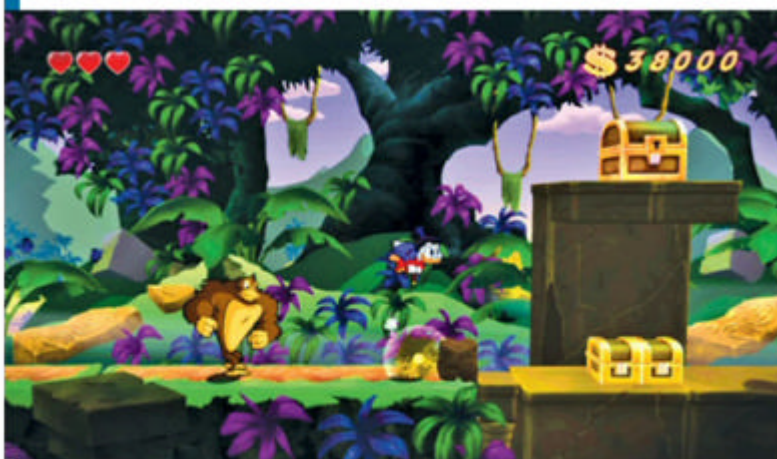
■ **PROTOTYPE 2** IS a fairly typical open world game, and its collection of Trophies are fairly typical of open world games too. What this means is a lot based around collecting items and upgrading your character, though there are a good percentage that require you to use all your unlocked abilities so read through the list before playing. 'The Floor Is Lava' is actually easy enough, since you can combine the four abilities you need between two tall buildings, hopping between each of them over and over again. 'Strike, You're Out' is best done on the first island in your own helicopter: as soon as you see the icon for a Strike Team, find it, hunt it down, kill it. And lastly there's the tallest point in the city that, if you're worried about finding it, is located on the third island. There's not much else to the game's Trophies, to be honest.

DUCKTALES REMASTERED

PLATFORM: PS3 **DIFFICULTY:** 3/5

TROPHIES: 20 🏆 0 🏆 0 🏆 1 🏆 19

■ **WEIRDLY, THIS MIGHT** be the toughest set of Trophies in this month's collection, but then it is a reworked version of a classic retro game and therefore inherently tricky. You'll need to complete it three times, once on Medium or lower, once on Hard and once on Extreme (which is unlocked after completing it on Hard). A weird one to keep an eye out for, however, is 'A Few Gears Loose', which is unlocked for accessing the secret gyro area. This is achieved by having a total amount of cash ending in \$70,000 – this can be any amount as long as the last five digits read 70,000. Once you have this, start any level and you'll be taken to the secret area. There are other level-specific Trophies, but there's no real strategy to them other than practise. However, 'It's A Duck Blur' can only be achieved on Easy or Medium difficulty and requires you to collect the invincibility-inducing Magic Coin and killing five enemies while under a single Coin's effect. It's not too tough and can be done on any stage.



WOAH DAVE!

PLATFORM: VITA **DIFFICULTY:** 1/5

TROPHIES: 16 🏆 0 🏆 1 🏆 0 🏆 15

■ **SINCE WOAH DAVE!** revolves entirely around picking up pennies, the Trophies for collecting 1,000 of them should be your main goal. There are others to aim for too, of course, and many of these will come just by playing the game, since a good chunk of the few this game has are about dying in certain ways. Start by inputting your initials as 'POO' to unlock the Trophy cleverly named 'Poo!'. 'Right in the Toilet!' is unlocked for throwing a Woah Block (you'll recognise these straight away) into the lava, 'Hot Woah on Woah Action!' for throwing one block onto another and 'Boom Shakka Lakka' for destroying 10 enemies with a single Woah Block.

INSTANT GAME
COLLECTION

LOADOUT

You might argue that the PS4's not short on shooters, but it doesn't have anything else quite like *Loadout*, a free-to-play multiplayer game that's worth your attention



■ **IF YOU'RE SOMEONE** who loves customisation, games like *Borderlands* that provide you with an unfathomably large array of weapons to play with, or competitive multiplayer, you might just want to turn your attention to free-to-play third-person shooter *Loadout*.

Loadout is all about customising your character and weaponry, providing you with the ability to create guns that feel unique to you. There are a number of weapon chassis to choose from – such as rifles, launchers and beams – and from there, you can choose a variety of attachments and ammo types that drastically change how your gun performs.

It is possible, for example, to create a beam gun that you use to heal your teammates, a launcher with remote controlled rockets, or a rifle with ammo that does burn

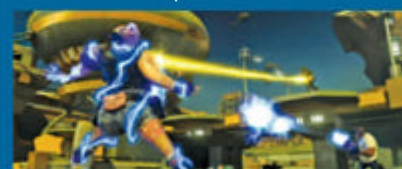
damage to your enemies. Once you add magazine size, scopes and other upgrades into the equation, there really is a lot of potential for building up a varied array of guns that suit different approaches and tactics.

Lets not forget that to earn all the 'Blutonium' you'll need to upgrade and customise your weapons and character, you're going to have to actually play the game. Fortunately, *Loadout*'s ostentatious, fast-paced brand of multiplayer gameplay is pretty good fun.

It may look chaotic and silly but *Loadout* is a team-based multiplayer shooter, and as such, it does reward those who work together as a squad. If you can get some people together to play it, we'd definitely recommend you give *Loadout* a go. In fact, even if you're going in solo, there's enough to *Loadout* to make it worth a shot.

WAYS TO PLAY

Game modes define shooters. These are our picks from *Loadout*.



BLITZ

In this mode, a control point will be designated, sparking a rush in which both teams try to reach it and capture it for their team in order to add to their score.



JACKHAMMER

Classic capture the flag mode, but with a twist: once you carry the enemies' Jackhammer back to your base, you've got five insta-kill smashes that you can use to crush foes.



DOMINATION

This is a mode that you'd expect to find in pretty much any shooter, but it's ubiquitous for a reason. Domination is all about capturing and holding zones in order to rack up points.



ANNIHILATION

A mash-up of other modes, you can contribute to hitting the target score by collecting Blutonium from dead foes, capturing control points or grabbing the enemies' Jackhammer.

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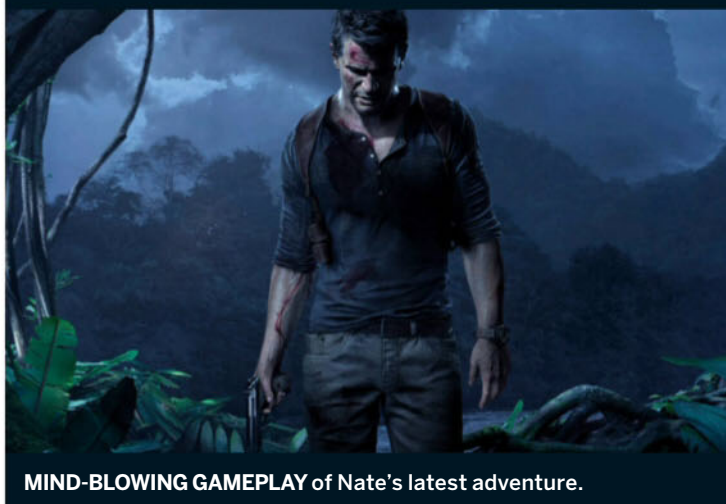
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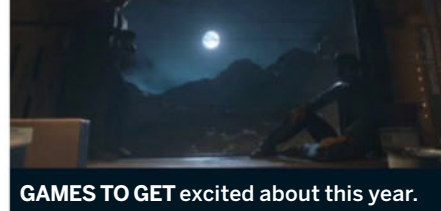
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UNCHARTED 4: A THIEF'S END



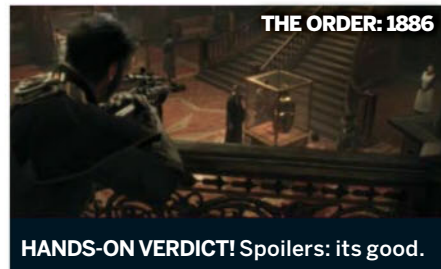
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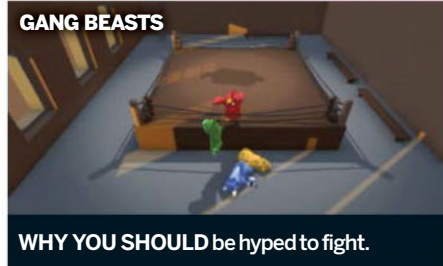
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HANDS-ON VERDICT! Spoilers: its good.

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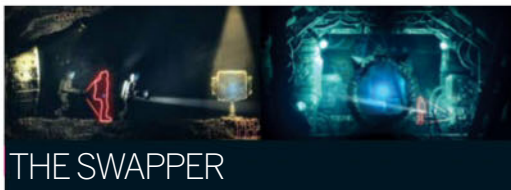
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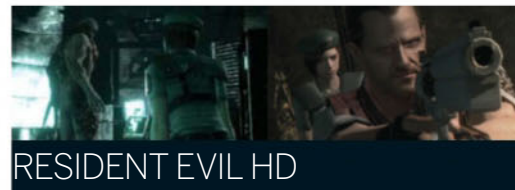
Keep an eye on our Facebook and Twitter channels for information on our Twitch tournaments, where you can play videogames with us for the world to watch!

The game changes each time, and the best players will win prizes – free games, or just some of the other tat that we found around our office. Come and join in the fun next time and maybe you could win something neat.



THE SWAPPER

With this wonderful, atmospheric puzzle game available on PS Plus, there's no good excuse for PS Plus subscribers amongst you not to give this game a go. We've completed it once already, so come and ask us for help if you're stuck.

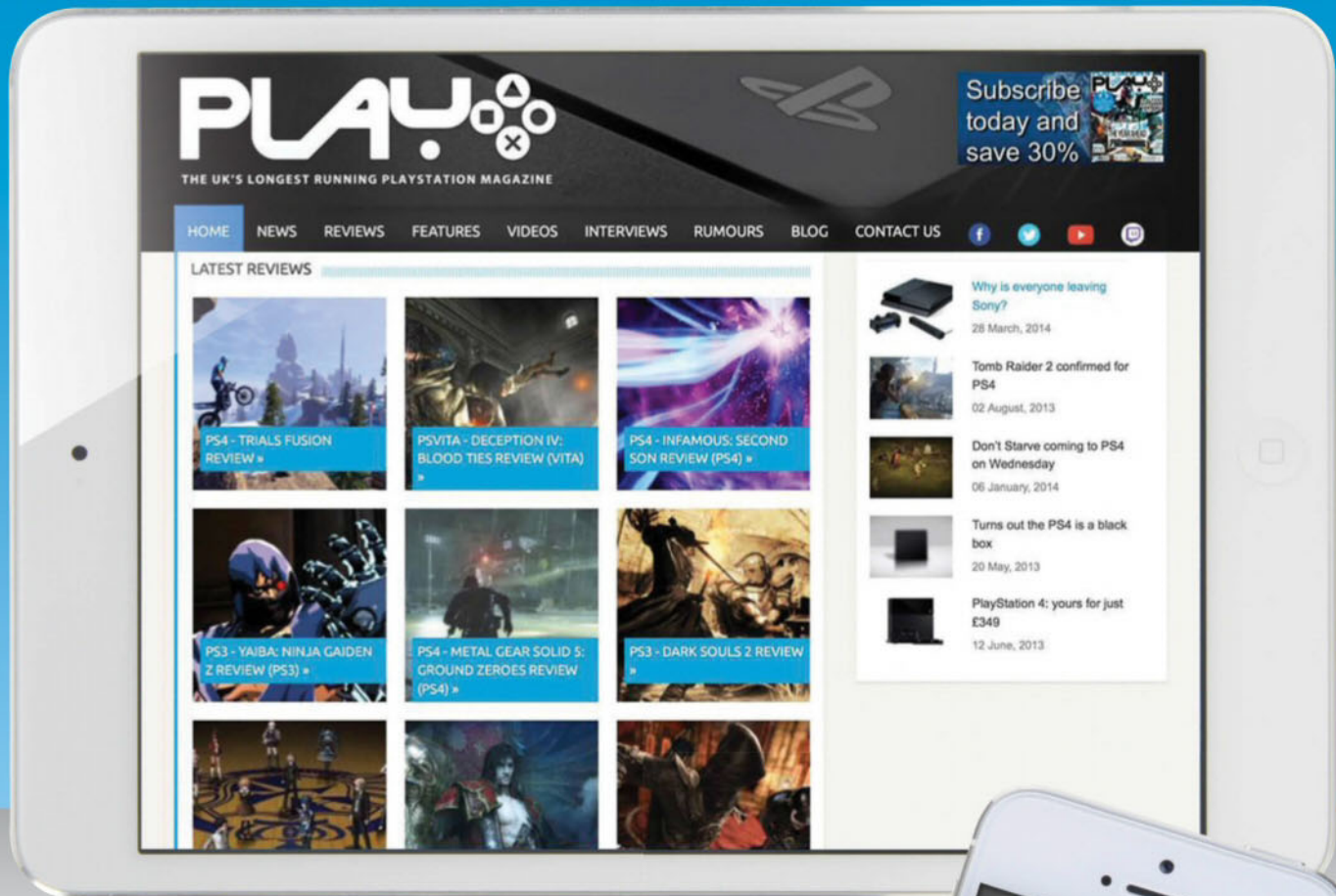


RESIDENT EVIL HD

When one of the greatest games in PlayStation history makes its way to PS4 in the form of this remaster, will we be playing it again? Of course, but this time, we won't be jumping in fear when the dogs leap through the window.

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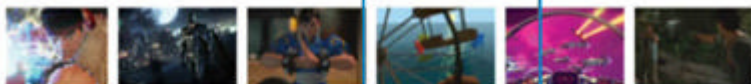
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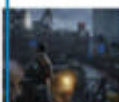
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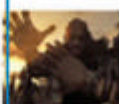


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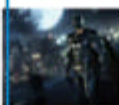
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Details on The Division's development may have been leaked by an alpha tester.



WATCH 4 90 MINS OF DYING LIGHT GAMEPLAY

Ahead of its release on PS4, Techland has released 90 minutes of Dying Light gameplay.



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The ending for Rocksteady's upcoming PS4 title Batman: Arkham Knight may have already been inadvertently revealed.

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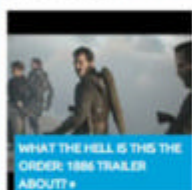
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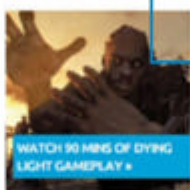
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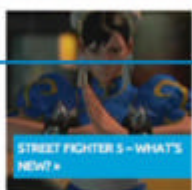
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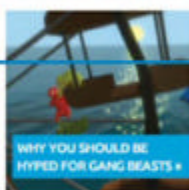
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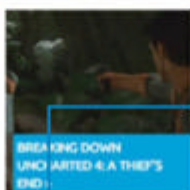
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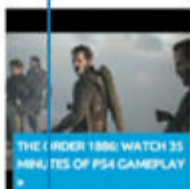
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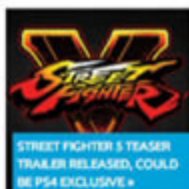
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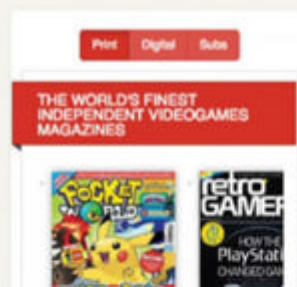
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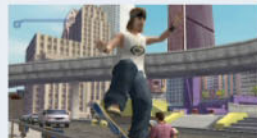
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IF YOU WANT TO KNOW WHAT A GAME SCORED THEN THESE PAGES ARE FOR YOU

TEAM PICKS SCORE ATTACK GAMES



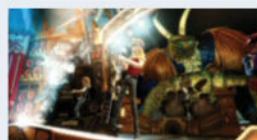
top five LUKE ALBIGÉS

- 1 Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3
- 2 Geometry Wars 3: Dimensions
- 3 Zen Pinball 2
- 4 Rock Band Blitz
- 5 Every Extend Extra



top five LIAM WARR

- 1 Trials Fusion
- 2 Hotline Miami
- 3 Geometry Wars 3: Dimensions
- 4 Dirt 3
- 5 Tony Hawk's Underground



top five DREW SLEEP

- 1 Guitar Hero III: Legends Of Rock
- 2 Burnout 3: Takedown
- 3 Hotline Miami
- 4 Resogun
- 5 Pac-Man Championship Edition DX



top five PAUL WALKER-EMIG

- 1 Hotline Miami
- 2 Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3
- 3 Velocity 2X
- 4 Guitar Hero 2
- 5 PaRappa the Rapper

PS4 LISTING



GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Assassin's Creed IV: Black Flag	237	83%
Assassin's Creed: Unity	251	65%
Alien: Isolation	249	90%
Battlefield 4	238	80%
Bound By Flame	245	62%
Call Of Duty: Advanced Warfare	251	87%
Call Of Duty: Ghosts	238	75%
Child Of Light	244	79%
CounterSpy	248	50%
Daylight	245	20%
Dead Nation: Apocalypse Edition	242	74%
Destiny	249	85%
Destiny: The Dark Below	252	72%
Diablo III: Reaper Of Souls	248	92%
Disney Infinity 2.0	249	80%
Don't Starve	240	81%
Dragon Age: Inquisition	251	84%
Driveclub	250	77%
Dynasty Warriors 8 XLCE	243	80%
EA Sports UFC	246	75%
The Evil Within	250	84%
Far Cry 4	251	80%
Foz	243	95%
FIFA 15	249	85%
Final Fantasy XIV: A Realm Reborn	243	85%
Geometry Wars 3: Dimensions	252	92%
Grand Theft Auto V	251	97%
Hohokum	248	80%
inFamous: First Light	249	55%
inFamous: Second Son	242	86%
Killzone Shadow Fall	238	80%
Killzone Shadow Fall: Intercept	246	84%
Knack	238	55%
Lara Croft And The Temple Of Osiris	252	56%
Lego Batman 3: Beyond Gotham	252	68%
Lego Marvel Super Heroes	238	85%
Lego The Hobbit	244	65%
LittleBigPlanet 3	251	92%
Lords Of The Fallen	251	75%
Mercenary Kings	244	85%
Metal Gear Solid V: Ground Zeroes	242	85%
Middle-earth: Shadow Of Mordor	250	80%
Murdered: Soul Suspect	246	48%
NBA 2K15	250	84%
Need For Speed Rivals	238	83%
NHL 15	249	63%
Octodad: Dadliest Catch	244	60%
PES2015	250	88%
Plants Vs Zombies: Garden Warfare	248	71%
Outlast	241	73%
Resogun	238	91%
An addictive and accomplished shoot-'em-up, <i>Resogun</i> is an indie delight and a surprise PS4 launch highlight. Awesome stuff.		
Resogun Heroes	247	93%
Rogue Legacy	248	91%
Skylanders Swap Force	238	77%
Skylanders Trap Team	250	79%
Sniper Elite III	246	72%
Tales From The Borderlands: Zer0 Sum	252	70%
The Amazing Spider-Man 2	245	25%
The Binding Of Isaac: Rebirth	251	90%
The Crew	252	52%
The Last Of Us Remastered	247	94%
Thief	241	70%
Tiny Brains	240	68%
Transistor	245	87%
Transformers: Rise Of The Dark Spark	247	30%
Trials Fusion	244	80%
Valiant Hearts	247	64%
War Thunder	239	80%

GAME

ISSUE

SCORE

Watch Dogs	245	80%
Warriors Orochi 3 Ultimate	249	62%
Wolfenstein: The New Order	245	78%
WWE 2K15	252	48%

PS3 LISTING



007 Legends	225	44%
2014 FIFA World Cup Brazil	244	69%
3D Dot Game Heroes	192	87%
50 Cent: Blood On The Sand	177	70%
Ace Combat: Assault Horizon	211	78%
The Adventures Of Tintin	212	58%
Afro Samurai	177	61%
After Burner Climax	193	91%
Agarest: Generations Of War	187	78%
Agarest: Generations Of War 2	223	43%
Agarest: Generations Of War Zero	209	52%
Age Of Booty	172	81%
Air Conflicts: Secret Wars	208	58%
Alice: Madness Returns	207	57%
Alien Breed: Impact	196	80%
Alien Breed 2: Assault	201	82%
Alien Breed 3: Descent	204	61%
Aliens: Colonial Marines	230	45%
Aliens Vs Predator	189	79%
All Zombies Must Die!	214	64%
Alone In The Dark	173	70%
Alpha Protocol	193	83%
Amy	215	19%
Anarchy: Rush Hour	194	73%
Ape Escape	208	55%
Aquapazza: Aquaplus Dream Match	239	70%
Aqua Panic	193	68%
Arcana Heart 3	207	79%
Armageddon Riders	207	65%
Armored Core: For Answer	173	65%
Armored Core 4	153	67%
Armored Core V	217	60%
Army Of Two	164	80%
Army Of Two: The 40th Day	188	65%
Army Of Two: The Devil's Cartel	231	44%
Assassin's Creed	161	58%
Assassin's Creed II	186	89%
Assassin's Creed III	225	78%
Assassin's Creed: Brotherhood	199	91%
Assassin's Creed: Revelations	212	75%
Assassin's Creed: Rogue	251	74%
Asura's Wrath	216	67%
Atelier Ayesha: The Alchemist Of Dust	230	60%
Atelier Rorona: The Alchemist Of Arland	198	77%
Backbreaker	193	70%
Back To The Future: It's About Time	204	71%
The Baconing	210	72%
Band Hero	187	68%
Batman: Arkham Asylum	183	85%
Batman: Arkham City	211	94%
Batman: Arkham Origins	237	85%
Battle Fantasia	176	67%
Battlefield 1943	182	89%
Battlefield: Bad Company	168	78%
Battlefield: Bad Company 2	190	93%
Battlefield 3	212	88%
Battleship	219	44%
Bayonetta*	187	93%
The Beatles: Rock Band	184	96%
Beat Hazard Ultra	213	79%
Beat Sketcher	201	85%
Beyond Good & Evil HD	207	86%
Beyond: Two Souls	236	70%
Binary Domain	216	70%
Bionic Commando	179	82%
Bionic Commando Rearmed	169	88%
Bionic Commando Rearmed 2	203	61%
BioShock	172	93%

GAME

ISSUE


SCORE

BioShock 2	189	88%
BioShock Infinite	230	97%
Birds Of Steel	217	55%
BlackSite	163	43%
Blade Kitten	197	72%
Bladestorm: The Hundred Years' War	160	58%
Blast Factor	152	72%
BlazBlue: Calamity Trigger	190	85%
BlazBlue: Continuum Shift	198	94%
Blazing Angels	151	54%
Bleach: Soul Resurrección	209	63%
Blitz: The League II	172	67%
Blokus	202	54%
BloodRayne: Betrayal	211	62%
Blur	193	86%
Bodycount	210	54%
Bomberman Ultra	185	82%
Borderlands	185	80%
Borderlands 2	223	90%
Borderlands: The Pre-Sequel	250	69%
The Bourne Conspiracy	168	72%
Braid	188	93%
Brink	206	67%
Brothers: A Tale Of Two Sons	233	83%
Brothers In Arms: Hell's Highway	171	75%
Brütal Legend	185	79%
Bulletstorm	203	86%
The Bureau: XCOM Declassified	235	57%
Burnout Crash	211	79%
Burnout Paradise	162	74%
Burn Zombie Burn	178	85%
Buzz! Quiz TV	168	82%
Buzz! Quiz World	185	70%
Calling All Cars	155	81%
Call Of Duty 3	151	77%
Call Of Duty: World At War	173	68%
Call Of Duty 4: Modern Warfare	160	88%
Call Of Duty: Modern Warfare 2	186	94%
Call Of Duty: Modern Warfare 3	212	88%
Call Of Duty: Black Ops	199	94%
Call Of Duty: Black Ops II	226	80%
Call Of Juarez: Bound In Blood	181	85%
Call Of Juarez: Gunslinger	232	80%
Call Of Juarez: The Cartel	208	30%
Captain America: Super Soldier	208	70%
Castle Crashers	200	88%
Castlevania: Harmony Of Despair	212	67%
Castlevania: Lords Of Shadow	197	85%
Castlevania: Lords Of Shadow 2	241	81%
Carnival Island	213	53%
Catan	195	85%
Cars 2	208	68%
The Cave	230	77%
Catherine	215	61%
Champion Jockey	210	50%
Chronicles Of Riddick: Assault On Dark Athena	178	87%
Child Of Eden	211	80%
Chime Super Deluxe	203	80%
Civilization Revolution	168	90%
Clash Of The Titans	193	65%
Clive Barker's Jericho	159	84%
The Club	163	80%
Colin McRae: DiRT	158	91%
Colin McRae: DiRT 2	184	87%
Command & Conquer: Red Alert 3	178	65%
Commander's Challenge	185	68%
Command & Conquer	175	44%
Comet Crash	186	84%
Comix Zone	210	62%
Conan	160	71%
Condemned 2	165	78%
Costume Quest	199	70%
Conflict: Denied Ops	164	50%
Counter Strike: Global Offensive	223	89%
Crash Commando	174	80%
Crash Time 4: The Syndicate	218	37%
Crazy Machines Elements	210	71%
Create	199	71%

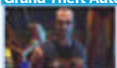
THIS MONTH'S NEW ENTRIES

The newest games, freshly
squeezed among all your
old favourites

The Crew	52%
Lego Batman 3: Beyond Gotham	68%
Lara Croft And The Temple Of Osiris	56%
Tales From The Borderlands: Zer0 Sum	70%
WWE 2K15	48%
Geometry Wars 3: Dimensions	92%
Destiny: The Dark Below	72%
Kingdom Hearts 2.5 HD ReMIX	88%

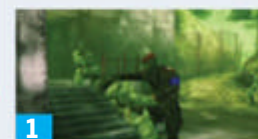
GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Critter Crunch	188	91%
Cross Edge	182	59%
Crystal Defenders	184	48%
Crysis 2	204	72%
Crysis 3	230	61%
Cubixx HD	207	76%
The Cursed Crusade	211	40%
Damnation	181	38%
Damage Inc: Pacific Squadron WWII	223	37%
Dance Dance Revolution	201	52%
Dante's Inferno	189	80%
Dark Mist	164	53%
The Darkness	154	91%
The Darkness II	215	76%
Dark Sector	165	62%
Dark Souls	211	90%
Dark Souls II	242	90%
Darkstalkers Resurrection	230	82%
Dark Void	188	81%
Darksiders	188	83%
Darksiders II	221	86%
DC Universe Online	202	80%
de Blob 2	203	65%
Dead Or Alive 5	223	78%
Dead Island	210	79%
Dead Island: Riptide	231	65%
Dead Rising 2	197	78%
Dead Rising 2: Off The Record	211	61%
Dead Space	172	87%
Dead Space 2	201	92%
Dead Space 3	228	70%
Dead Space: Extraction	203	88%
Dead Space: Ignition	199	47%
Dead To Rights: Retribution	192	68%
Deadly Premonition: The Director's Cut	231	82%
Dead Nation	201	86%
Deadpool	233	60%
DeathSpank	195	83%
Def Jam: Icon	151	79%
Def Jam Rapstar	199	72%
Defiance	231	50%
Demon's Souls	193	92%
Destroy All Humans: Path Of The Furon	178	29%
Derrick The Deathfin	227	79%
Deus Ex: Human Revolution	209	91%
Devil May Cry 4	163	89%
Devil May Cry HD Collection	217	80%
Diablo III	235	89%
DiRT 3	206	85%
DiRT Showdown	219	84%
Disgaea 3: Absence Of Justice	175	81%
Dishonored	224	92%
Disney Infinity	235	81%
DJ Hero	186	91%
DJ Hero 2	198	88%
Doctor Who: The Eternity Clock	220	32%
Doom 3: BFG Edition	225	69%
Double Dragon Neon	224	37%
DmC Devil May Cry	227	93%
		
DmC injects new life into one of the best genres in all of gaming, and does so with a style and confidence that elevates it beyond its roots.		
Dragon Age: Origins	186	82%
Dragon Age II	203	86%
Dragon Ball: Raging Blast	186	40%
Dragon Ball Z: Burst Limit	168	61%
Dragon's Crown	235	87%
Driver: San Francisco	209	68%
Droplitz	184	91%
Duke Nukem Forever	207	33%
D&D: Chronicles Of Mystara	233	80%
Dungeon Siege III	206	80%
Dust 514	233	51%
Dynasty Warriors: Gundam	160	40%
Dynasty Warriors: Gundam 2	176	43%
Dynasty Warriors: Gundam 3	208	56%
Dynasty Warriors: Strikeforce	189	37%
Dynasty Warriors 6: Empires	181	44%

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Dynasty Warriors 7: Empires	230	40%
Dynasty Warriors 8	234	71%
Earthworm Jim HD	196	89%
EA Sports Active 2	200	81%
EA Sports Grand Slam Tennis	215	75%
EA Sports MMA	198	89%
Eat Lead	178	38%
Eat Them!	202	60%
echochrome	169	85%
echochrome II	202	83%
EDF: Insect Armageddon	208	64%
The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion	152	91%
The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim	212	93%
Elefunk	170	45%
El Shaddai: Ascension Of The Metatron	208	77%
Enchanted Arms	152	69%
Enemy Territory: Quake Wars	168	60%
Enslaved: Odyssey To The West	197	83%
Epic Mickey 2: The Power Of Two	226	55%
Eternal Sonata	176	87%
Eufhoria	212	85%
Everybody's Golf 5	158	88%
Everybody's Golf: World Tour	165	91%
Explosion	203	70%
Eye Of Judgment	159	65%
EyePet	185	83%
F1 2011	211	71%
F1 2012	223	79%
F1 Race Stars	226	61%
FaceBreaker	170	55%
Fairy Fencer F	250	43%
Fallout 3	173	97%
Fallout: New Vegas	198	88%
Family Guy: Back To The Multiverse	227	40%
Fantastic Four: Rise Of The Silver Surfer	155	39%
Far Cry 2	172	74%
Far Cry 3	226	88%
Far Cry 3: Blood Dragon	231	85%
Fat Princess	183	65%
Fatal Inertia EX	168	65%
FEAR	151	81%
FEAR 2: Project Origin	176	87%
FEAR 3	208	60%
FIFA 12	210	86%
FIFA 13	223	82%
FIFA 14	236	90%
FIFA Street (2012)	217	74%
Final Fight: Double Impact	193	90%
The Fight	199	42%
Fight Night Champion	203	88%
Fight Night Round 3	151	87%
Fight Night Round 4	181	84%
Final Fantasy XIV: A Realm Reborn	236	81%
Final Fantasy XIII	190	85%
Final Fantasy XIII-2	214	80%
Final Fantasy XIII: Lightning Returns	240	80%
Fist Of The North Star: Ken's Rage	198	51%
Fist Of The North Star: Ken's Rage 2	230	58%
Flight Control HD	198	85%
Flock!	179	70%
Folklore	158	66%
Front Mission Evolved	198	52%
Frogger: Hyper Arcade Edition	221	55%
From Dust	211	82%
Fuel	180	49%
Full Auto 2: Battlelines	151	69%
Fuse	232	73%
Game Of Thrones	220	39%
Gatling Gears	207	62%
Genji: Days Of The Blade	151	38%
Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter 2	157	83%
Ghost Recon Future Soldier	219	60%
Ghostbusters: The Videogame	180	80%
GI Joe	183	22%
The Godfather	151	37%
The Godfather II	178	38%
God Of War III	190	88%
God Of War: Ascension	230	90%

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
God Of War Collection*	188	93%
God Of War Collection: Volume II	210	70%
The Golden Compass	162	32%
GoldenEye 007: Reloaded	213	63%
Gotham City Imposters	216	78%
Gran Turismo 5	200	85%
Gran Turismo 6	239	83%
Grand Theft Auto IV	166	98%
Grand Theft Auto V	236	97%
		
Rockstar's latest is a masterpiece: the perfect swansong for the generation and a wonderful addition to the franchise.		
Greed Corp	191	75%
Green Day: Rock Band	194	77%
Grid 2	232	79%
Grid Autosport	246	67%
GTI Club+	174	72%
GTA: Episodes From Liberty City	191	94%
Guardians Of Middle-earth	227	71%
Guitar Hero III	160	90%
Guitar Hero 5	184	81%
Guitar Hero: Aerosmith	168	63%
Guitar Hero Greatest Hits	182	76%
Guitar Hero Metallica	179	88%
Guitar Hero: Van Halen	189	65%
Guitar Hero: Warriors Of Rock	197	71%
Guitar Hero World Tour	173	95%
Gundemium Collection	197	80%
Gunstar Heroes	181	85%
Hamsterball	194	72%
Harry Potter And The Half-Blood Prince	182	60%
Harry Potter And The Order Of The Phoenix	155	32%
Haze	167	64%
Heavenly Sword	157	71%
Heavy Rain	189	94%
Heavy Weapon	187	75%
Heroes Over Europe	184	48%
Hitman: Absolution	225	93%
Hitman HD Trilogy	230	75%
Homefront	203	69%
The House Of The Dead 4	218	82%
The House Of The Dead: Overkill	212	75%
Hunted: The Demon's Forge	207	59%
Hustle Kings	190	87%
Hyperdimension Neptunia	202	21%
I Am Alive	217	64%
Ico & Shadow Of The Colossus HD	210	94%
IL-2 Sturmovik: Birds Of Prey	183	72%
The Incredible Hulk	168	52%
inFamous	180	81%
inFamous 2	207	83%
Inferno Pool	181	81%
Injustice: Gods Among Us	231	80%
Inversion	220	49%
Invincible Tiger: The Legend Of Han Tao	185	70%
Iron Man	166	58%
Iron Man 2	193	50%
The Jak And Daxter Trilogy	216	82%
Jak And Daxter: The Lost Frontier	187	59%
James Bond 007: Blood Stone	199	63%
James Cameron's Avatar: The Game	187	64%
JoJo's Bizarre Adventure: All Star Battle	244	80%
Journey	216	87%
Juiced 2: Hot Import Nights	159	78%
Jurassic Park: The Game	194	60%
Just Cause 2	190	87%
Kane & Lynch: Dead Men	160	73%
Kane & Lynch 2: Dog Days	196	71%
Katamari Forever	184	88%
Kick-Ass The Game	194	60%
Killer Is Dead	235	75%
Killzone HD	225	65%
Killzone 2	176	93%
Killzone 3	202	80%
Kingdom Hearts HD 1.5 ReMIX	236	80%
Kingdom Hearts 2.5 HD ReMIX	252	88%
Kingdoms Of Amalur: Reckoning	215	70%
The King Of Fighters XII	182	82%

*denotes import review

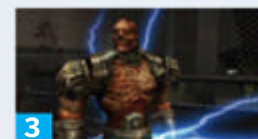
TOP TEN GAMECEPTIONS



1
Metal Gear & Metal Gear 2
in *MGS3: Subsistence*



2
Virtua Fighter 2
in *Yakuza 5*



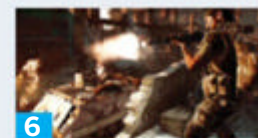
3
Wolfenstein 3D
in *Return To Castle Wolfenstein*



4
Prince Of Persia
in *Prince Of Persia: Sands Of Time*



5
Flashback
in *Flashback*



6
Zork
in *Call of Duty: Black Ops*



7
Galaxian
in *Ridge Racer*



8
Spy Hunter
in *Spy Hunter*



9
Gyrruss
in *Contra: Legacy Of War*



10
Pitfall!
in *Pitfall: The Lost Expedition*

PLAY'S BEST GAMES IF YOU LOVE...



FOOTBALL

PLAY: PES 2015

As a simulation of the beautiful game, you can't get better than *PES 2015* (until *PES 2016*, perhaps). The variety of goals and the different ways games can play out makes *PES 2015* consistently engaging.



THINGS EXPLODING

PLAY: UNCHARTED 2: AMONG THIEVES

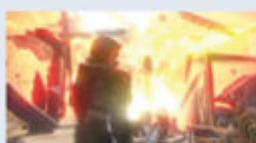
Nobody does set pieces like Naughty Dog and *Uncharted 2* is packed full of adrenaline pumping scenes with falling buildings, trains hanging off mountains and all sorts of other spectacular scenarios.



MOUNTAINOUS BOSSES

PLAY: GOD OF WAR 3

Perhaps our favourite thing about Sony's action series is the scale of its epic boss fights. Taking on Cronos, whose fingers are fifty times your size, is a particular highlight.



SMASHING THROUGH WALLS

PLAY: RED FACTION: GUERRILLA

When it comes to destructibility, look no further *Red Faction: Guerrilla*. Smashing your way through buildings and cover adds creativity to combat.





WOLVES


PLAY: OKAMI HD

Its cel-shaded styling and innovative mechanics that riffed on painting made *Okami* one of the PS2's most revered RPGs. Good thing it got an HD release on the PS3, then.


GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
The King Of Fighters XIII	213	76%
Knights Contract	202	53%
Kung Fu Panda 2	207	20%
Kung Fu Rider	196	65%
Lair	158	52%
Landit Bandit	195	66%
LA Noire	206	91%
Lara Croft And The Guardian Of Light	198	90%
The Last Guy	171	91%
Last Rebellion	191	42%
Lead And Gold: Gangs Of The Wild West	193	65%
Legend Of Spyro: Dawn Of The Dragon	174	54%
Legendary	173	62%
Lego Batman	173	65%
Lego Batman 2	221	80%
Lego Harry Potter: Years 1-4	194	79%
Lego Harry Potter: Years 5-7	213	67%
Lego Indiana Jones: The Original Adventures	167	73%
Lego Indiana Jones 2: The Adventure Continues	187	71%
Lego Pirates Of The Caribbean	206	76%
Lego Rock Band	187	75%
Lego Star Wars: The Complete Saga	160	76%
Lego Star Wars III: The Clone Wars	204	79%
Lego: The Lord Of The Rings	227	85%
Leisure Suit Larry: Box Office Bust	180	24%
Limbo	209	90%
LittleBigPlanet	172	94%
LittleBigPlanet 2	201	96%
LittleBigPlanet: Karting	225	85%
LocoRoco Cocoreccho!	159	80%
Lollipop Chainsaw	221	72%
London 2012	221	45%
The Lord Of The Rings: Aragorn's Quest	199	60%
The Lord Of The Rings: Conquest	175	52%
The Lord Of The Rings: War In The North	213	42%
Lost Planet 2	192	75%
Lost Planet 3	236	58%
Lost Planet: Extreme Condition	163	69%
Lumines Supernova	178	90%
Madagascar 3	224	39%
Madden NFL 12	209	85%
Madden NFL 13	223	86%
Madden NFL Arcade	188	58%
Mad Riders	220	70%
Mafia II	196	81%
MAG	189	68%
Magic: Duels Of The Planeswalker	202	84%
Magic: Duels Of The Planeswalker 2012	208	70%
Majin And The Forsaken Kingdom	199	72%
Marvel Vs Capcom 2	182	90%
Marvel Vs Capcom 3	202	88%
Marvel Ultimate Alliance	151	64%
Marvel Ultimate Alliance 2	185	57%
Max Payne 3	219	77%
Mass Effect 2	201	97%
Mass Effect 3	216	93%
Medal Of Honor	198	86%
Medal Of Honor Airborne	161	85%
Medal Of Honor: Warfighter	225	72%
Mega Man 9	172	75%
Mega Man 10	192	82%
Mercenaries 2: World In Flames	171	78%
Metal Gear Rising: Revengeance	228	91%
Metal Gear Solid 4	167	92%
Metal Gear Solid HD Collection	214	91%
Metro: Last Light	231	60%
Michael Jackson: The Experience	205	58%
Microbot	202	51%
Midnight Club: Los Angeles	173	84%
Mindjack	202	38%
Minecraft	240	93%
Mini Ninjas	184	80%
Mirror's Edge	173	71%
MLB: The Show 14	245	90%
ModNation Racers	192	90%
Monkey Island 2: Special Edition	195	94%
Mortal Kombat	205	81%
Mortal Kombat Vs DC Universe	173	68%
MotoGP 13	233	74%
Motorhead	173	60%
MotorStorm	151	92%
MotorStorm: Apocalypse	203	76%
MotorStorm: Pacific Rift	172	93%
Mud: FIM Motocross Championship	217	50%

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
MX Vs ATV Alive	206	42%
MX Vs ATV Reflex	189	68%
MX Vs ATV Untamed	164	58%
naï'd	201	61%
Namco Museum Essentials	193	60%
Naruto: Ultimate Ninja Storm	174	59%
Naruto Shippuden: UNS Generations	217	53%
Naruto Shippuden: UNS 3	230	85%
Naughty Bear	195	64%
NBA 2K12	211	88%
NBA 2K13	224	88%
NBA Jam	200	68%
NBA Street: Homecourt	151	68%
Need For Speed Carbon	151	76%
Need For Speed: Hot Pursuit	199	91%
Need For Speed: Most Wanted	225	95%
 <i>Need For Speed: Most Wanted</i> is easily the best arcade racer of this generation. We absolutely love it.		
Need For Speed ProStreet	161	86%
Need For Speed Shift	184	81%
Need For Speed: The Run	213	63%
Need For Speed Undercover	173	75%
NeverDead	215	39%
Nier	192	54%
Ni No Kuni: Wrath Of The White Witch	227	85%
NHL 12	210	78%
NHL 13	223	74%
NIGHTS Into Dreams...	224	75%
Ninja Gaiden Sigma	154	88%
Ninja Gaiden Sigma 2	184	82%
Ninja Gaiden 3	217	63%
Ninja Gaiden 3: Razor's Edge	231	80%
Noby Noby Boy	177	85%
No More Heroes: Heroes' Paradise	206	89%
Nucleus	155	82%
Okami HD	225	90%
One Piece: Pirate Warriors	224	69%
Operation Flashpoint: Dragon Rising	185	78%
Operation Flashpoint: Red River	205	75%
The Orange Box	161	93%
Outland	207	72%
OutRun Online Arcade	180	80%
Overlord II	181	68%
Pac-Man Championship Edition DX	201	91%
Pain	183	69%
Payday: The Heist	213	88%
Payday 2	235	79%
Peggle	189	94%
Persona 4 Arena	231	91%
 Essential for both <i>Persona</i> fans and fighting game enthusiasts, <i>Persona 4 Arena</i> is an absolute joy to play.		
Persona 4 Arena Ultimix	250	92%
PES 2012	210	74%
PixelJunk 4am	220	40%
PixelJunk Eden	169	67%
PixelJunk Shooter	187	93%
PixelJunk Shooter 2	204	90%
PixelJunk SideScroller	213	77%
PixelJunk Racers	160	74%
Planet Minigolf	196	58%
PlayStation All-Stars Battle Royale	225	80%
PlayStation Move Heroes	204	54%
Poker Night 2	232	55%
Port Royale 3: Pirates & Merchants	224	54%
Portal 2	205	95%
Prince Of Persia	174	83%
Prince Of Persia: Classic	173	67%
Prince Of Persia: The Forgotten Sands	193	68%
Prince Of Persia Trilogy	200	88%
Prison Break: The Conspiracy	191	40%
Prototype	181	76%
Prototype 2	219	75%
Puddle	216	76%
The Punisher: No Mercy	182	49%
Puppeteer	236	70%
Pure	171	80%
Puzzle Chronicles	194	70%
Puzzle Dimensions	208	81%
Puzzle Quest Galactrix	181	68%
Quantum Conundrum	221	90%
Quantum Of Solace	175	57%
Quantum Theory	197	29%
Race Driver: GRID	167	85%
Ratchet & Clank: Q-Force	227	52%
Rag Doll Kung-Fu: Fists Of Plastic	179	83%

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Rage	211	60%
Rainbow Moon	221	68%
Rainbow Six Vegas	155	88%
Rainbow Six Vegas 2	164	78%
Rango	203	54%
Ratchet & Clank: A Crack In Time	186	82%
Ratchet & Clank: All 4 One	211	68%
Ratchet & Clank: Tools Of Destruction	160	72%
Ratchet & Clank Trilogy HD	221	88%
Rayman Legends	235	83%
Rayman Origins	212	80%
Red Dead Redemption	193	92%
Red Faction: Armageddon	207	62%
Red Faction: Guerrilla	180	80%
Remember Me	232	61%
Renegade Ops	211	78%
Resident Evil Chronicles HD Collection	221	82%
Resident Evil Code Veronica X	211	72%
Resident Evil: Operation Raccoon City	217	33%
Resident Evil: Revelations HD	232	71%
Resident Evil 4 HD	210	93%
Resident Evil 5	177	86%
Resident Evil 6	223	88%
Resistance: Fall Of Man	151	83%
Resistance 2	173	90%
Resistance 3	210	88%
Resonance Of Fate	191	79%
Retro City Rampage	228	78%
Ridge Racer 7	151	75%
Ridge Racer Unbounded	217	67%
Riff: Everyday Shooter	162	86%
Rise Of The Argonauts	176	58%
Risen 2: Dark Waters	222	58%
Risen 3: Titan Lords	248	25%
Risk: Factions	202	80%
Rock Band Blitz	223	80%
Rock Band	169	94%
Rock Band 2	179	96%
Rock Band 3	199	84%
Rocksmith	223	78%
Rogue Warrior	188	09%
Rugby World Cup 2011	209	49%
Rune Factory Oceans	220	51%
RUSE	197	82%
The Saboteur	187	67%
Sacred 2: Fallen Angel	180	76%
Sacred 3	247	60%
Saints Row 2	172	79%
Saints Row: The Third	211	88%
SBK Generations	220	51%
Saint Seiya: Sanctuary Battle	216	52%
Sam & Max: The Devil's Playground Ep1	194	90%
Sam & Max: The Devil's Playground Ep2	194	92%
Savage Moon	175	87%
Saw	186	52%
Saw II: Flesh & Blood	198	36%
Scott Pilgrim Vs The World	197	77%
The Secret Of Monkey Island SE	195	92%
Sega Rally Online Arcade	208	74%
Sega Mega Drive Ultimate Collection	177	85%
Section 8: Prejudice	209	80%
SBK 2011	206	70%
SBK Generations	220	54%
SBK X: Superbike World Championship	193	67%
Sega Rally	158	92%
Sengoku Basara: Samurai Heroes	198	76%
Shadows Of The Damned	207	79%
Shank	197	86%
Shatter	183	91%
Shaun White Skateboarding	198	70%
Shaun White Snowboarding	173	72%
Shellshock 2: Blood Trails	177	32%
Shift 2: Unleashed	204	66%
The Shoot	199	76%
Shoot Many Robots	217	81%
Silent Hill: Downpour	217	81%
Silent Hill HD Collection	217	76%
Silent Hill: Homecoming	174	64%
The Simpsons Arcade Game	216	54%
The Simpsons Game	160	82%
The Sims 3	199	87%
The Sims 3: Pets	212	70%
SingStar	159	80%
Singularity	195	80%
Siren Blood Curse	170	62%
Skate	159	86%
Skate 2	175	82%

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
Skate 3	192	86%
Skullgirls	218	88%
Sleeping Dogs	222	80%
The Sly Collection	200	84%
Sly Cooper: Thieves In Time	230	60%
Sniper Elite V2	218	52%
Sniper: Ghost Warrior	206	45%
Sniper: Ghost Warrior 2	230	55%
SOCOM: Special Forces	205	63%
Sonic Adventure	198	63%
Sonic Adventure 2	225	69%
Sonic CD	214	82%
Sonic The Hedgehog 4: Episode 1	199	82%
Sonic The Hedgehog 4: Episode 2	225	40%
Sonic & Sega All-Stars Racing	190	78%
Sonic & All-Stars Racing Transformed	227	88%
Sonic Generations	212	70%
Sonic The Hedgehog	151	52%
Sonic Unleashed	175	48%
Sorcery	219	76%
SoulCalibur IV	169	94%
SoulCalibur V	214	80%
South Park: The Stick of Truth	242	81%
Spec Ops: The Line	220	59%
Spider-Man 3	155	33%
Spider-Man: Edge Of Time	212	38%
Spider-Man: Shattered Dimensions	197	69%
Spider-Man: Web Of Shadows	173	55%
Spin Jam	174	32%
Splatterhouse	200	58%
Splinter Cell Double Agent	153	79%
Split/Second: Velocity	192	90%
Sports Champions	196	83%
Sports Champions 2	225	65%
SSX	216	45%
Stacking	203	88%
Starhawk	219	81%
Star Ocean: The Last Hope International	190	63%
Star Trek	231	52%
Star Trek: D-A-C	189	57%
Star Wars: The Force Unleashed	171	65%
Star Wars: The Force Unleashed II	199	61%
Star Wars: Pinball	230	79%
Start The Party!	196	72%
Stormrise	178	51%
Stranglehold	159	65%
Street Fighter III: 3rd Strike Online Edition	209	92%
Street Fighter IV	176	95%
Street Fighter X Tekken	217	83%
Strength Of The Sword 3	234	81%
Strider	242	62%
Super Puzzle Fighter II HD Turbo Remix	168	78%
Super Rub-A-Dub	151	83%
Super Street Fighter IV: Arcade Edition	207	88%
Stuntman: Ignition	157	82%
Super Stardust HD	155	74%
Superstars V8: Next Challenge	190	55%
Superstars V8 Racing	181	63%
Super Street Fighter II Turbo HD Remix	176	72%
Super Street Fighter IV	191	90%
Supremacy MMA	211	40%
Switchball	191	75%
Swords And Soldiers	199	88%
Syndicate	216	78%
Tales Of Graces f	222	77%
Tales Of Monkey Island	196	91%
Tales Of Xillia	234	70%
Tales Of Xillia 2	249	71%
Tekken 5: Dark Resurrection Online	161	87%
Tekken 6	184	94%
Tekken Tag Tournament 2	223	90%
Test Drive Ferrari Racing Legends	221	60%
Tetris	202	84%
Test Drive Unlimited 2	203	62%
The Amazing Spider-Man	221	61%
The Last Of Us	233	94%
 When <i>The Last Of Us</i> is good (winter), it's better than anything else this gen – we do not say that lightly.		
The Last Of Us: Left Behind	242	81%
The Testament Of Sherlock Holmes	224	55%
The Walking Dead	231	92%
The Walking Dead: Survival Instinct	231	20%
Thor: God Of Thunder	206	38%
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 14	231	61%
Time Crisis 4	166	69%
Time Crisis: Razing Storm	199	58%

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
TimeShift	162	72%
TMNT: Turtles In Time-Re-shelled	186	57%
TNA Impact!	171	71%
Tokyo Jungle	223	81%
Tom Clancy's EndWar	173	80%
Tom Clancy's HAWX	177	75%
Tom Clancy's HAWX 2	196	69%
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell Blacklist	235	71%
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell Trilogy HD	210	78%
Tomb Raider	229	90%
Tomb Raider Trilogy	204	86%
Tomb Raider: Underworld	173	83%
Tony Hawk's Project 8	151	85%
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater HD	223	73%
Tony Hawk's Proving Ground	160	72%
Tony Hawk: Ride	188	52%
Top Darts	202	71%
Top Gun	198	53%
Top Gun: Hard Lock	218	45%
Top Spin 3	168	71%
Top Spin 4	203	60%
Topotai: Spinning Through Worlds	183	61%
Toy Story 3	195	82%
Transformers: Dark Of The Moon	208	64%
Transformers: Fall Of Cybertron	223	73%
Transformers: War For Cybertron	194	80%
Trash Panic	181	79%
Trials Of Topaq	159	50%
Trine	184	85%
Trinity: Souls Of Zill O'll	202	56%
Trinity Universe	194	61%
Tron Evolution	200	17%
Tumble	198	70%
Turning Point: Fall Of Liberty	165	40%
Turok	163	46%
Twisted Metal	216	68%
Two Worlds II	203	64%
UFC Undisputed 2009	180	90%
UFC Undisputed 2010	193	88%
UFC Undisputed 3	215	82%
Ultimate Marvel Vs Capcom 3	212	78%
Ultra Street Fighter IV	246	85%
Uncharted: Drake's Fortune	161	87%
Uncharted 2: Among Thieves	185	96%
Uncharted 3: Drake's Deception	212	90%
Under Siege	207	71%
Unearthed: Trail Of Ibn Battuta: Ep1	233	05%
The Unfinished Swan	225	78%
Unreal Tournament III	162	88%
Untold Legends: Dark Kingdom	151	54%
Valkyria Chronicles	173	82%
Vancouver 2010	189	76%
Vanquish	197	93%
Viking: Battle For Asgard	165	74%
Virtua Fighter 5	151	83%
Virtua Fighter 5: Final Showdown	220	90%
Virtua Tennis 3	150	91%
Virtua Tennis 4	205	79%
Wakeboarding HD	195	65%
The Walking Dead: All That Remains	240	89%
The Walking Dead: 400 Days	234	83%
Wanted: Weapons Of Fate	179	63%
Warhammer 40,000: Space Marine	210	51%
Warhawk	157	84%
Warriors: Legends Of Troy	202	14%
Warriors Orochi 3	217	59%
Watchmen: The End Is Nigh	183	55%
Way Of The Samurai 3	190	16%
Wet	184	41%
Wheelman	178	72%
Where The Wild Things Are	188	56%
White Knight Chronicles	190	55%
White Knight Chronicles II	207	49%
Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?	214	79%
WipEout HD	172	84%
Wizorb	222	78%
Wolfenstein	183	72%
Wonderbook: Book Of Spells	226	80%
Worms Collection	224	85%
Worms 2: Armageddon	198	87%
Worms Ultimate Mayhem	217	80%
WRC: FIA World Rally Championship	197	76%
WRC 2: FIA World Rally Championship	211	63%
WRC 3 FIA World Rally Championship	225	75%
WWE All Stars	204	82%
WWE Legends Of WrestleMania	178	80%
WWE 12	212	50%

GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
WWE 13	225	55%
X-Blades	178	54%
XCOM: Enemy Unknown	224	94%
 Thinking, planning, failing and dying is back in fashion: XCOM is a phenomenal reimagining of a classic title and an instant classic in its own right.		
X-Men Arcade	203	60%
X-Men Destiny	211	35%
X-Men Origins: Wolverine	179	71%
Yaiba: Ninja Gaiden Z	242	35%
Yakuza: Dead Souls	216	60%
Yakuza 3	191	80%
Yakuza 4	203	79%
Zen Pinball 2	224	90%
Zombie Apocalypse: Never Die Alone	213	69%
Zone Of The Enders HD Collection	226	81%
Zuma	182	78%

PS VITA LISTING

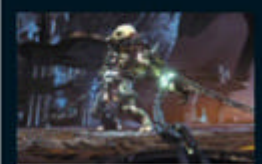


GAME	ISSUE	SCORE
A-Men	217	70%
Army Corps Of Hell	217	64%
Assassin's Creed III: Liberation	225	76%
Atelier Meruru: The Apprentice Of Arland	221	35%
Everybody's Golf	215	86%
BlazBlue: Continuum Shift Extend	216	85%
Call Of Duty: Black Ops Declassified	227	18%
Danganronpa: Trigger Happy Havoc	242	85%
Danganronpa 2: Goodbye Despair	249	89%
Dead Nation	201	86%
Destiny Of Spirits	244	76%
Dokuro	230	71%
Earth Defense Force 2017 Portable	230	82%
Escape Plan	216	81%
FIFA Football	216	80%
fiOw	151	90%
Flower	176	85%
Gravity Crash	187	85%
Gravity Rush	219	86%
Hotline Miami	233	85%
Hustle Kings	216	81%
Joe Danger	194	96%
Killzone: Mercenary	236	88%
LittleBigPlanet	223	93%
Little Deviants	215	69%
Lumines Electric Symphony	216	85%
MGS HD Collection	221	70%
ModNation Racers: Road Trip	215	59%
Mortal Kombat	219	83%
MotorStorm RC	217	81%
Muramasa Rebirth	234	80%
New Little King's Story	224	70%
Ninja Gaiden Sigma Plus	217	72%
Ninja Gaiden Sigma 2 Plus	230	60%
Oddworld: Stranger's Wrath HD	214	86%
Organhythm	230	55%
PlayStation All-Stars Battle Royale	225	80%
Persona 4 Golden	228	94%
PixelJunk Monsters	163	94%
Puddle	222	82%
Rayman Origins	216	84%
Reality Fighters	215	52%
Resistance: Burning Skies	219	54%
Ridge Racer	216	48%
Rocketbirds: Hardboiled Chicken	212	82%
Silent Hill: Book Of Memories	225	32%
Sorcery Saga: Curse of the Great Curry God	240	70%
Soul Sacrifice	232	85%
Sound Shapes	223	88%
Superfrog HD	234	41%
Super Monkey Ball: Banana Splitz	224	78%
Sumoni: Demon Arts	230	46%
Super Stardust Delta	216	84%
Tearaway	239	80%
Terraria	232	85%
Touch My Katamari	216	83%
Toukiden: The Age Of Demons	241	86%
Ultimate Marvel vs Capcom 3	216	80%
Uncharted: Fight For Fortune	227	83%
Uncharted: Golden Abyss	215	83%
Unit 13	216	67%
Velocity Ultra	233	80%
Virtua Tennis 4: World Tour Edition	215	81%
Virtue's Last Reward	227	84%
WipEout 2048	215	87%

*denotes import review

PLAYING THE PLAYLIST

Watch out! Games!



WHAT
(have they been playing?)

Destiny

WHY (was it chosen?)
I'M SO DAMN CLOSE TO 32

LUKE ALBIGÉS

SO I'VE BEEN banging my head against Crota's End since it went live and just as the Vault Of Glass screwed me over time and time again before, I still haven't seen the one last armour drop I need to max out my Titan. By the time you read this, I'll hopefully have seen a change in fortune, but even that one-level difference didn't stop me tearing shit up in the Iron Banner. I'm looking forward to seeing what's next for the game – once I finally hit 32, I can start making a dent in my backlog before the next wave of awesome games hits. Come on, Bungie... give me the damn chest already!



WHAT
(have they been playing?)

COD: Advanced Warfare

WHY (was it chosen?)
Multiplayer, obviously...

PAUL WALKER-EMIG

I'VE NOT REALLY got into a *Call Of Duty* game since *Modern Warfare 2*, but that's all changed with *Advanced Warfare*. Naturally, I'm not really interested in the campaign, but, rather, the multiplayer. It took me a while to get a handle on it and start having decent games, but once I did, it became immensely satisfying. Unfortunately, as I start to play other things and go back to *AW* in shorter spurts, my limited skills seem to wane fast, so I'm not sure how much longer I'll be playing this.



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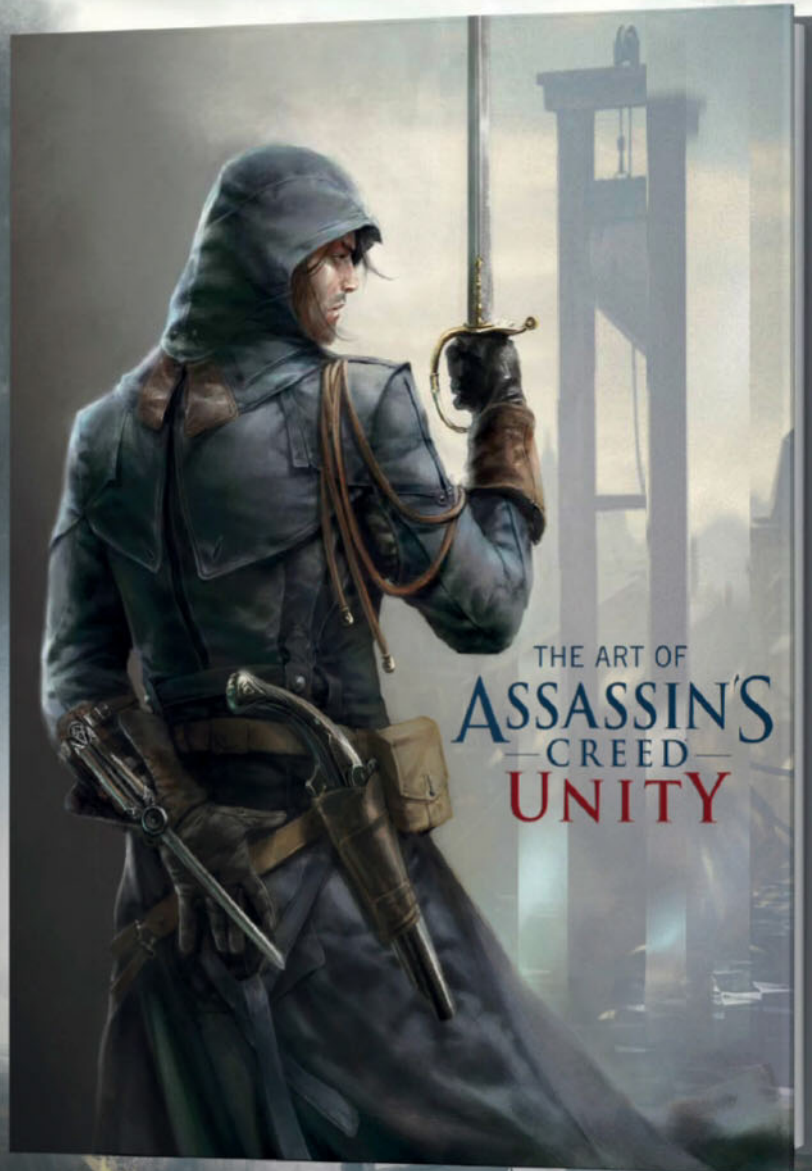
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